

THE PROPHET YUSUF (as)



One of them said, "Do not take Yusuf's life but throw him to the bottom of the well, so that some travellers may discover him, if this is something that you have to do."

(Surah Yusuf: 10)



HARUN YAHYA

The subject of this book is the "Story of Yusuf" which narrates some of the events from the life of the Prophet Yusuf. In one verse Allah informs Muslims that there exist lessons to be drawn from the "Story of Yusuf."

"In Yusuf and his brothers there are Signs for every one of those who wants to ask." (Surah Yusuf: 7)

In the verse, it is stressed that "there are Signs (lessons) for every one of those who wants to ask." So, it is important for all Muslims to pay attention to these verses and learn from them. Consequently, in compliance with the verse, it is necessary to inquire and examine into the events regarding the Prophet Yusuf (as) and his brothers.

When we subject the life of the Prophet Yusuf (as) to scrutiny, we see that Muslims of almost all ages experience similar suffering, become the subjects of slander by people who are distant to religion and face many situations with which they have to be patient and in which they have to put their trust in Allah. When he was still very young, the Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown into a well and left to die by his brothers, was sold as a slave, and was subjected to many wrongful accusations. Moreover, he spent many years in prison and was tested with numerous difficulties. After all the plots hatched against him, and the many years spent forgotten in prison for no reason, Allah placed him in authority over the treasures of the land, and granted him power and possessions. The Laws of Allah rule here too, as in all other fields of life. In many verses, Allah promises Muslims that He will comfort them after the difficulties they go through. Having a good grasp of the Story of Yusuf will provide the sort of experience from which believers can benefit all through their lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University, and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. His main focus has been the refutation of Darwinism and materialism, two modern myths presented under a scientific guise. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one objective: to broaden the readers' perspective by encouraging them to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of God and His unity, and to display the decrepit foundations and perverted works of godless systems.



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By Harun Yahya
Edited By: Uthman Ibrahim Morrison

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A-34, Mount Kailash
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M I L L A T
B O O K C E N T R E

PROPHET YUSUF

(AS)

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(Surah Yusuf: 7)

HARUN YAHYA

May 2003

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name HARUN YAHYA, was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he then studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as an author who has written very important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, the invalidity of their claims and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and bloody ideologies such as fascism and communism.

His pen-name is made up of the names "Harun" (Aaron) and "Yahya" (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on the cover of the books is symbolic and is linked to the their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final scripture) and the Prophet Muhammad (saas), the last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and sunnah, the author makes it his purpose to disprove each one of the fundamental tenets of godless ideologies and to have the "last word", so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. The seal of the final Prophet, who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, is used as a sign of his intention of saying this last word.

All author's works center around one goal: to convey the Qur'an's message to people, encourage them to think about basic faith-related issues (such as the existence of Allah, His unity and the Hereafter), and to expose the feeble foundations and perverted ideologies of godless systems.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, and Spain to Brazil. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, and Indonesian, and they are enjoyed by readers worldwide.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering their faith in Allah and in many others gaining a deeper insight into their faith. The wisdom, and the sincere and easy-to-understand style gives these books a distinct touch which directly effects any one who reads or studies them. Immune to objections, these works are characterized by their features of rapid effectiveness, definite results and irrefutability. It is unlikely that those who read these books and give serious thought to them can any longer sincerely advocate the materialistic philosophy, atheism or any other perverted ideology or philosophy. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence since these books refuted such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the collection of books written by Harun Yahya.

There is no doubt that these features result from the wisdom and lucidity of the Qur'an. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's search for Allah's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Considering these facts, those who encourage people to read these books, which open the "eyes" of the heart and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would just be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books which create confusion in peoples' minds, lead man into ideological chaos, and which, clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in peoples' hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is apparent that it is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the moral values of the Qur'an. The success and impact of this service are manifest in readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and all the ordeals the majority of people undergo is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This state can only be ended with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, which leads people into the downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, it is clear that this service has to be provided more speedily and effectively. Otherwise, it may be too late.

It is no exaggeration to say that the collection of books by Harun Yahya have assumed this leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the 21st century will attain the peace, justice and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

The works of the author include *The New Masonic Order, Judaism and Freemasonry, Global Freemasonry, Kabbalah and Freemasonry, Knight Templars, Islam Denounces Terrorism, Terrorism: The Ritual of the Devil, The Disasters Darwinism Brought to Humanity, Communism in Ambush, Fascism: The Bloody Ideology of Darwinism, The 'Secret Hand' in Bosnia, Behind the Scenes of The Holocaust, Behind the Scenes of Terrorism, Israel's Kurdish Card, The Oppression Policy of Communist China and Eastern Turkestan, Palestine, Solution: The Values of the Qur'an, The Winter of Islam and The Spring to Come, Articles 1-2-3, A Weapon of Satan: Romanticism, The Light of the Qur'an Destroyed Satanism, Signs from the Chapter of the Cave to the Last Times, Signs of the Last Day, The Last Times and The Beast of the Earth, Truths 1-2, The Western World Turns to God, The Evolution Deceit, Precise Answers to Evolutionists, The Blunders of Evolutionists, Confessions of Evolutionists, The Misconception of the Evolution of the Species, The Qur'an Denies Darwinism, Perished Nations, For Men of Understanding, The Prophet Musa(as), The Prophet Muhammad (saas), Prophet Sulayman (as), The Golden Age, Allah's Artistry in Colour, Glory is Everywhere, The Importance of the Evidences of Creation, The Truth of the Life of This World, The Nightmare of Disbelief, Knowing the Truth, Eternity Has Already Begun, Timelessness and the Reality of Fate, Matter: Another Name for Illusion, The Little Man in the Tower, Islam and the Philosophy of Karma, The Dark Magic of Darwinism, The Religion of Darwinism, The Collapse of the Theory of Evolution in 20 Questions, Engineering in Nature, Technology Mimics Nature, The Impasse of Evolution I (Encyclopedic), The Impasse of Evolution II (Encyclopedic), Allah is Known Through Reason, The Qur'an Leads the Way to Science, The Real Origin of Life, Consciousness in the Cell, Technology Imitates Nature, A String of Miracles, The Creation of the Universe, Miracles of the Qur'an, The Design in Nature, Self-Sacrifice and Intelligent Behaviour Models in Animals, The End of Darwinism, Deep Thinking, Never Plead Ignorance, The Green Miracle: Photosynthesis, The Miracle in the Cell, The Miracle in the Eye, The Miracle in the Spider, The Miracle in the Gnat, The Miracle in the Ant, The Miracle of the Immune System, The Miracle of Creation in Plants, The Miracle in the Atom, The Miracle in the Honeybee, The Miracle of Seed, The Miracle of Hormone, The Miracle of the Termite, The Miracle of the Human Body, The Miracle of Man's Creation, The Miracle of Protein, The Miracle of Smell and Taste, The Miracle of Microworld, The Secrets of DNA.*

The author's childrens books are: *Wonders of Allah's Creation, The World of Animals, The Glory in the Heavens, Wonderful Creatures, Let's Learn Our Islam, The Miracles in Our Bodies, The World of Our Little Friends: The Ants, Honeybees That Build Perfect Combs, Skillful Dam Builders: Beavers.*

The author's other works on Quranic topics include: *The Basic Concepts in the Qur'an, The Moral Values of the Qur'an, Quick Grasp of Faith 1-2-3, Ever Thought About the Truth?, Crude Understanding of Disbelief, Devoted to Allah, Abandoning the Society of Ignorance, The Real Home of Believers: Paradise, Knowledge of the Qur'an, Qur'an Index, Emigrating for the Cause of Allah, The Character of the Hypocrite in the Qur'an, The Secrets of the Hypocrite, The Names of Allah, Communicating the Message and Disputing in the Qur'an, Answers from the Qur'an, Death Resurrection Hell, The Struggle of the Messengers, The Avowed Enemy of Man: Satan, The Greatest Slander: Idolatry, The Religion of the Ignorant, The Arrogance of Satan, Prayer in the Qur'an, The Theory of Evolution, The Importance of Conscience in the Qur'an, The Day of Resurrection, Never Forget, Disregarded Judgements of the Qur'an, Human Characters in the Society of Ignorance, The Importance of Patience in the Qur'an, General Information from the Qur'an, The Mature Faith, Before You Regret, Our Messengers Say, The Mercy of Believers, The Fear of Allah, Jesus Will Return, Beauties Presented by the Qur'an for Life, A Bouquet of the Beauties of Allah 1-2-3-4, The Iniquity Called "Mockery," The Mystery of the Test, The True Wisdom According to the Qur'an, The Struggle Against the Religion of Irreligion, The School of Yusuf, The Alliance of the Good, Slanders Spread Against Muslims Throughout History, The Importance of Following the Good Word, Why Do You Deceive Yourself?, Islam: The Religion of Ease, Zeal and Enthusiasm Described in the Qur'an, Seeing Good in All, How do the Unwise Interpret the Qur'an?, Some Secrets of the Qur'an, The Courage of Believers, Being Hopeful in the Qur'an, Justice and Tolerance in the Qur'an, Basic Tenets of Islam, Those Who do not Listen to the Qur'an, Taking the Qur'an as a Guide, A Lurking Threat: Heedlessness, Sincerity Described in the Qur'an, The Religion of Worshipping People, The Methods of the Liar in the Qur'an.*

TO THE READER

The reason why a special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution is that this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation, and therefore the existence of Allah, during the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt.

Therefore, showing that this theory is a deception is a very important duty, which is strongly related to the religion. It is imperative that this important service be rendered to everyone. Some of our readers may find the chance to read only one of our books.

Therefore, we think it appropriate to spare a chapter for a summary of this subject.

In all the books by the author, faith-related issues are explained in the light of Qur'anic verses, and people are invited to learn Allah's words and to live by them. All the subjects that concern Allah's verses are explained in such a way as to leave no room for doubt or question marks in the reader's mind. The sincere, plain and fluent style employed ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand the books. This effective and lucid narrative makes it possible to read them in a single sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts recounted in these books and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This book and all the other works by Harun Yahya can be read individually or discussed in a group. Those readers who are willing to profit from the books will find discussion very useful in that they will be able to relate their own reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it is a great service to the religion to contribute to the presentation and circulation of these books, which are written solely for the good pleasure of Allah. All the books of the author are extremely convincing, so, for those who want to communicate the religion to other people, one of the most effective methods is to encourage them to read these books.

It is hoped that the reader will take time to look through the review of other books on the final pages of the book, and appreciate the rich source of material on faith-related issues, which are very useful and a pleasure to read.

In them, one will not find, as in some other books, the personal views of the author, explanations based on dubious sources, styles unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, or hopeless, doubt-creating, and pessimistic accounts that create deviations in the heart.

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an was sent down to mankind by Allah to serve as a guide, it contains the very truest accounts, bringing glad tidings to man, warning him and instilling fear in him. It is a great mercy and the sole Divine Book. For that reason, it is the Qur'an that people must read and study above all else.

As well as containing the commandments of Allah, the Qur'an also gives people the most accurate information on a number of subjects.

Allah teaches us important wisdom in those sections that describe the lives of the prophets of the past. The life story of every prophet furnishes us both with lessons in faith and with examples of how we should behave in the time and society in which we live. Studying these life stories in detail, trying to grasp the wisdom they contain and praying to Allah that we might do so, is the duty of every Muslim.

In this book we shall be examining the life and struggles of one of these prophets of the past, Yusuf (as), and considering the

knowledge that Allah imparts to us concerning him.

Prophet Yusuf (as), known in the Bible as Joseph, is one of those prophets about whose life the Qur'an has most to say. Almost all of Surah Yusuf, one of the longest in the Qur'an, is devoted to his life and that of his family. Early on in this surah, Allah reveals that his life story contains important indications, proofs and wisdom:

In Yusuf and his brothers there are Signs for every one of those who want to ask. (Surah Yusuf: 7)

Since Allah devotes a lot of space to the details of the life of Prophet Yusuf (as), we may be sure that believers have a great deal to learn from it. In fact, the final verse of the surah stresses that the life stories of the prophets contain important lessons for those who possess wisdom and reason and are capable of grasping the essential meanings inherent in creation:

There is instruction in their stories for people of intelligence. This is not a narration which has been invented but confirmation of all that came before, a clarification of everything, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe. (Surah Yusuf: 111)

One of the great examples of wisdom in the life stories of the prophets is the way the verses do not merely describe events in the past, but also provide lessons for people of future generations while pointing to events that have yet to take place. In this sense, the life of Yusuf (as) has several meanings. When we look at his life we see that

Muslims have faced similar difficulties in all ages, that they have been subjected to unfounded allegations by people who do not share their religion and that they have experienced a great many situations in which they have needed to exhibit patience and resignation before the will of Allah. We are told that at an early age Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown down a well by his brothers and left to die, that he was later sold into slavery and spent long years in prison as a result of false accusations, and that he was tested with a number of difficulties. So when believers look at his life they find a great many similarities with their own lives. It is the immutable design of Allah that believers over the ages have faced similar situations. Allah makes this clear in a number of verses:

That was the pattern with those We sent before you as Our Messengers. You will not find any changing of Our pattern. (Surat al-Isra': 77)

That is Allah's pattern which has passed away before. You will not find any changing in the pattern of Allah. (Surat al-Fath: 23)

In addition to this, after all the traps that had been set for him; the way he was thrown into a well, slandered, unjustly imprisoned and left there for years, Allah eventually made Yusuf (as) head of the Treasury. He gave him power, rank and wealth. The unalterable pattern of Allah applies here, just as it does in every other field. Allah promises in several verses that the faithful will be delivered after all their tribulations:



Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land as He made those before them successors, and will firmly establish for them their religion with which He is pleased and give them, in place of their fear, security. "They worship Me, not associating anything with Me." Any who disbelieve after that, such people are deviators. (Surat an-Nur: 55)

Just as with the other prophets, believers who read the life story of Prophet Yusuf (as) will encounter many glad tidings and learn a great many lessons. That being the case, every believer must read these stories and attempt to grasp the wisdom they contain. A thorough understanding of the life of Prophet Yusuf (as) will provide believers with the kind of insight that will be of use to them in their daily lives and throughout their lives.

THE HISTORY OF THE PROPHETS

When we examine the history of the prophets, we encounter one striking truth. The great majority of them were descended from the same line. This is revealed in a number of verses in the Qur'an:

Those are some of the Prophets Allah has blessed, from the descendants of Adam and from those We carried with Nuh, and from the descendants of Ibrahim and Isra'il and from those We guided and chose... (Surah Maryam: 58)

As can be seen from this verse, the superior individuals who were sent as prophets were specially chosen by Allah and called by Him to the true path. It is of course an enormous honour to be selected by Allah. The prophets are therefore very worthy individuals, both because they were chosen by Allah and because of their fine upright natures.

After the first prophet, Adam, the oldest Prophet mentioned in the Qur'an is Nuh (as). As we know, Nuh (as) demonstrated great patience and determination in explaining the existence and oneness of Allah to an unbelieving tribe, and when that tribe insisted in their denial, they were drowned in a huge downpour Allah has sent. Only Nuh (as) and those believers with him were saved, surviving the downpour by means of the ark they had built, as Allah had promised.

Allah praises the Prophet Nuh (as) in the Qur'an:

"Peace be upon Nuh among all beings!" That is how we recompense the good-doers. He truly was one of Our servants who believed. (Surat as-Saffat: 79-81)

In another verse Allah reveals that the Prophet Nuh's line (as) will be "enduring," in other words that it will never die out:

Nuh called out to Us and what an excellent Responder We are! We rescued him and his family from the terrible plight and made his descendants the survivors. (Surat as-Saffat: 75-77)

Generations came and went after Prophet Nuh (as), and people again turned from the true path, beginning to worship idols and turning their backs on Allah. At that time Prophet Ibrahim (as) was given the gift of prophethood and charged with calling people back to Allah and the true path. Prophet Ibrahim (as) was one of those of the line of Prophet Nuh (as) which had remained "enduring" on earth. Allah reveals this in the Qur'an in these words:

***One of his followers in faith was Ibrahim.
(Surat as-Saffat: 83)***

Prophet Ibrahim (as) was a most pure and holy man, and one Allah praised. In one verse, Allah states:

Who could have a better religion than someone who submits himself completely to Allah and is a good-doer, and follows the religion of Ibrahim, a man of pure natural belief? Allah took Ibrahim as an intimate friend. (Surat an-Nisa': 125)

Again as revealed in the Qur'an concerning Prophet Ibrahim (as):

- ***Ibrahim was forbearing, compassionate, penitent. (Surah Hud: 75)***
- ***Ibrahim was a community in himself, exemplary, obedient to Allah, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the idolators. (Surat an-Nahl: 120)***
- ***He was thankful for His blessings. Allah chose him and guided him to a straight path. (Surat an-Nahl: 121)***
- ***Or do they in fact envy other people for the bounty Allah has granted them? We gave***

***the family of Ibrahim the Book and Wisdom,
and We gave them an immense kingdom.
(Surat an-Nisa: 54)***

• ***And among his descendants were Dawud
and Sulayman, and Ayyub, Yusuf, Musa and
Harun. (Surat al-An'am: 84)***

• ***And of Ibrahim, who paid his dues in full.
(Surat an-Najm: 37)***

With Prophet Ibrahim (as) there began an uninterrupted line of descent. Although he carried out his role as a messenger to the deniers of Allah with great sincerity and determination, most people around him (with the exception of his relative, Prophet Lut (as)) failed to heed his message. At this point, Prophet Ibrahim (as) requested from Allah a pure believer to be his heir and to continue to represent the religion of Allah on earth. Allah responded to the Prophet Ibrahim's prayer (as) with a miracle, giving his wife a pure child, even though she was old and barren. In this way Prophet Ibrahim (as) became the father of the Prophet Ishaq (as), who was a distinguished prophet in the sight of Allah, possessed of understanding, faith and God consciousness. In time, Prophet Ishaq (as) also had a son and called him Ya'qub. Both were gifts of Allah to the Prophet Ibrahim (as):

***When he had separated himself from them,
and what they worshipped besides Allah, We
gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub, making each of
them a Prophet. (Surah Maryam: 49)***

We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub and placed prophethood and the Book among his progeny. We gave him his reward in this world and in the hereafter he will be among the righteous. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 27)

Another son of Prophet Ibrahim (as) was the Prophet Isma'il (as). Together they constructed the first "house," or place of worship, the Ka'aba. The prayer they uttered at this time is recorded in the Qur'an in these terms:

And when Ibrahim built the foundations of the House with Isma'il: "Our Lord, accept this from us! You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Our Lord, make us both Muslims submitted to You, and our descendants a Muslim community submitted to You. Show us our rites of worship and turn towards us. You are the Ever-Returning, the Most Merciful." (Surat al-Baqara: 127-128)

Allah responded to this prayer, and created from the line of Prophet Ibrahim (as) a community completely surrendered to Allah. The sons and grandsons of Prophet Ibrahim (as), and their own children, were blessed people who included prophets among their number, believed in Allah and lived in accordance with His commandments despite living in a largely pagan environment. The prophets Musa (as), Harun (as), Dawud (as), Sulayman (as), Ya'qub

(as) and Yunus (as), and many more like them were all pure and perfect individuals of the line of Prophet Ibrahim (as). Allah says of the line of the prophets:

We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub, each of whom We guided. And before him We had guided Nuh. And among his descendants were Dawud and Sulayman, and Ayyub, Yusuf, Musa and Harun. That is how We recompense the good-doers. And Zakariyya, Yahya, 'Isa and Ilyas. All of them were among the righteous. And Isma'il, al-Yasa', Yunus and Lut. All of them We favoured over all beings. And some of their forebears, descendants and brothers; We chose them and guided them to a straight path. That is Allah's guidance. He guides by it those of His servants He wills. If they had associated others with Him, nothing they did would have been of any use. They are the ones to whom We gave the Book, Judgement and prophethood. If these people reject it We have already entrusted it to a people who did not. They are the ones Allah has guided... (Surat al-An'am: 84-90)



Many verses in the Qur'an speak of the Prophet Ibrahim (as), the Prophet Ya'qub (as) and the Prophet Yusuf (as). Sura 14 bears the name 'Ibrahim,' and Sura 12 "Yusuf."

Prophet Ibrahim (as) handed his beliefs on to his sons, a process that was repeated by his grandson Ya'qub (as). Allah describes this in the Qur'an:

When his Lord said to him, "Become a Muslim!" He said, "I am a Muslim who has submitted to the Lord of all the worlds." Ibrahim directed his sons to this, as did Ya'qub: "My sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so do not die except as Muslims." Or were you present when death came to Ya'qub and he said to his sons, "What will you worship when I have gone?" They said, "We

will worship your God, the God of your forefathers, Ibrahim, Isma'il and Ishaq—one God. We are Muslims submitted to Him." That was a community which has long since passed away. It has what it earned. You have what you have earned. You will not be questioned about what they did. (Surat al-Baqara: 131-134)

However, being descended from the line of Prophet Ibrahim (as) does not, of course, mean that someone will automatically turn to the true path. In the same way that the line has included prophets and devout and God fearing people, it has also produced those who have failed to grasp the concept of religion or to find the true path. This fact is also revealed in the Qur'an. Speaking, for example, of the line of Prophet Ibrahim (as) and his son Prophet Ishaq (as), Allah says:

We showered blessings upon him and upon Ishaq. Among their descendants are good-doers and also people who clearly wrong themselves. (Surat as-Saffat: 113)

Of course, the prophets were chosen, superior people, but as we shall see in the chapters that follow, among their grandchildren, brothers, sons, fathers and even their wives, there emerged people who behaved contrary to the will of Allah, went beyond the bounds He set and opposed His religion. Allah reveals this in another verse:

We sent Nuh and Ibrahim and placed prophet-hood and the Book among their descendants. Some of them are guided but many of them are deviators. (Surat al-Hadid: 26)

Among those who behaved in this way despite being from the line of the prophets were some of the sons of Prophet Ya'qub (as).

Allah speaks of Prophet Ya'qub (as) many times in the Qur'an, describing him as sincere, strong, man of inner sight, chosen and favoured. Allah speaks of Prophet Ya'qub's superior qualities (as), in these verses:

And remember Our servants Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub, men of true strength and inner sight. We purified their sincerity through sincere remembrance of the Abode. In Our eyes they are among the best of chosen men. (Surah Sad, 45-47)

And in addition to that We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub and made both of them righteous. We made them leaders, guiding by Our command, and revealed to them how to do good actions and perform prayer and pay the welfare tax, and they worshipped Us. (Surat al-Anbiya': 72-73)

In addition to this, Allah also reveals in Surah Yusuf that Prophet Ya'qub (as) was a man of knowledge, who had had special

knowledge imparted to him:

... He [Ya'qub] had knowledge which We had taught him, but most of mankind simply do not know. (Surah Yusuf: 68)

... He [Ya'qub] said, "Did I not say to you before, I know things from Allah you do not know?" (Surah Yusuf: 96)

One of the sons of Prophet Ya'qub (as) was the Prophet Yusuf (as), who best understood the faith and moral virtues that Ya'qub (as) encouraged in his children. We can see this from his words as Allah relates to us in the Qur'an:

I hold fast to the creed of my forebears Ibrahim and Ishaq and Ya'qub. We do not associate anything with Allah. And that is how Allah has favoured us and all mankind, but most do not give thanks. (Surah Yusuf: 38)

However, not all of Yusuf's brothers were like him. Apart from his younger brother, who closely resembled him, his other brothers failed to grasp the concept of faith, were prisoners of their own selfish desires and went beyond the bounds Allah set. Hence, it was these brothers who laid a cruel trap for Prophet Yusuf (as).

The following chapters of this book will describe this trap that was set for Prophet Yusuf (as), what happened afterwards, and his exemplary behaviour in the face of all these events.

PROPHET YUSUF'S CHILDHOOD (as)

HIS CHILDHOOD DREAM

Prophet Yusuf (as) had a dream when he was still a child and asked his father what it meant. His father, the Prophet Ya'qub (as), interpreted the dream and gave him glad tidings. He also warned Yusuf (as) against telling his brothers about it. This event is described in the Qur'an:

When Yusuf told his father, "Father! I saw eleven bright stars, and the sun and moon as well. I saw them all prostrate in front of me." He said, "My son, don't tell your brothers your dream lest they devise some scheme to injure you, satan is a clear-cut enemy to man. Accordingly your Lord will pick you out and teach you the true meaning of events and perfectly fulfil His blessing on you as well as on

the family of Ya'qub as He fulfilled it perfectly before upon your forebears, Ibrahim and Ishaq. Most certainly your Lord is Knowing, Wise." (Surah Yusuf: 4-6)

The reason why his father warned Yusuf (as) not to tell his brothers about the dream lay in their behaviour, which failed to inspire any confidence. As a man of wisdom and perception, Prophet Ya'qub (as) was aware that his sons possessed the kind of character that gave rise to strife and jealousy. Knowing them as well as he did, he guessed that they might well lay a trap for Yusuf (as). For that reason Prophet Ya'qub (as) warned Yusuf (as) of the enmity of satan and recommended that he be on his guard.

The lesson to be drawn from this is that Muslims need to be careful around people who sow discord and mischief and people who are lax in matters of religion, and not to tell such people about pleasing developments or good future prospects for the Muslims. That is because truly devout people are pleased when Muslims receive a blessing, grow stronger or generally come into a favourable position, whereas sowers of mischief are greatly distressed by it. Since such people have no wish to see anything benefiting the religion and its believers, they try to prevent such things happening and even collaborate with the enemies of the believers in order to bring this about. Allah describes the behaviour of mischief-makers:

If good happens to you it galls them. If a mishap occurs to you, they say, "We made our preparations in advance," and they turn away rejoicing. (Surat at-Tawba: 50)



Prophet Yusuf (as) dreamt of 11 stars, the sun and moon prostrating themselves before him. The illustration shows a representation of this.

That is why such people should not be told of pleasing and auspicious developments regarding Muslims before they actually happen, and that is why people of that type should be treated with great caution. Prophet Ya'qub's warning to his son Yusuf (as) is one clear example of this.

THE TRAP SET FOR PROPHET YUSUF (as) BY HIS BROTHERS

Prophet Ya'qub (as) was right to warn his son. The other brothers were jealous of him and his youngest brother. This envy burned so fiercely within them that it led them to lay a trap for Yusuf (as). This is yet another indication that the behaviour of Yusuf's brothers was far removed from the moral values of Islam and that they were failing to display the character of true believers. The trap they set and what they did to Prophet Yusuf (as) are related in the Qur'an:

When they declared, "Why! Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we are al-

though we constitute a powerful group. Our father is clearly making a mistake. Kill Yusuf or expel him to some land so that your father will look to you alone and then you can be people who do right." (Surah Yusuf: 8-9)

As appears quite clearly from these verses, envy was the principle motivation behind the trap that Yusuf's brothers laid for him. It was the thought that their father loved Yusuf (as) and his brother more which led them to this jealousy. They wanted a love directed only towards themselves, and thought, because of their numbers and the way that they encouraged one another, that they had a greater right to that love.

This is clearly a most twisted way of thinking. According to the Qur'an, the real measure of a believer's love is the degree to which it is motivated by God consciousness. Whoever is most conscious of Allah has most fear of Him and scrupulously remains within the limits of behaviour set by Him. Hence, the people they love the most are those who exhibit the most upright moral values. That is the believer's concept of love. It is evident that Prophet Ya'qub (as) adopted that same criterion when giving love to his sons. It is perfectly natural that since Prophet Yusuf (as) was more God fearing and possessed higher moral values than his other sons he should have loved him most. However, since Prophet Yusuf's brothers (as) did not share that perspective they were unable to understand the love their father felt for Yusuf (as) and their youngest brother. This is an important indicator of how far their characters had deviated from their religion.

Another aspect of their behaviour that is worthy of note is

the disrespectful way they treated their father. Despite their father being a chosen prophet and a man of superior intelligence and understanding, they claimed that their father was "clearly making a mistake" because of his love for Yusuf (as) and his brother. This impudence towards a prophet shows just how weak their faith was. Furthermore, the way they attempted to kill Prophet Yusuf (as) is proof again of the weakness of their faith and their mischief-making natures. It is quite evident that nobody who fears Allah, who believes he will have to account for his actions in the hereafter, and who knows that Allah sees and hears him at every moment could ever favour taking such a course of action, and would never even consider it for a moment. Yet in order to make their father love them or to satisfy their feelings of jealousy, these men believed the answer was to kill Prophet Yusuf (as) or abandon him somewhere on the road.

Killing is in any case a sin, and abandoning a young child by the roadside is a wicked action. People who could even consider doing such a thing clearly have no conscience or sense of compassion. Prophet Yusuf's brothers (as) were therefore, cruel and ruthless.

Their thought processes were also totally defective. They hoped that after committing such a sin and doing such a wicked thing to Yusuf (as) they could still remain one of those "who do right." Of course if someone truly wishes Allah to forgive him after he has transgressed he may still hope to amend his ways and be one of the God fearing. However, these men hoped to remain one of the God fearing even in the full knowledge that their actions were wrong. This is another piece of evidence that they lacked the power of reason and the character of the true believer.

It can be seen in the continuation of the verse that in mo-



A painting of the Prophet Ya'qub (as) and his children. The main motivation behind the trap his brothers set for Prophet Yusuf (as) was jealousy. It was the fact that they believed that their father loved Yusuf (as) and his brother more than he did them that spurred this jealousy.

ments of extreme peril Allah assisted Prophet Yusuf (as), inspiring his brothers to throw him down a well instead of murdering him:

One of them said, "Do not take Yusuf's life but throw him to the bottom of the well, so that some travellers may discover him, if this is something that you have to do." (Surah Yusuf: 10)

As we have seen, no matter what plans they came up with regarding Prophet Yusuf (as) and no matter what traps they laid for him, the prophet was always subject to the fate that Allah had set out for him. Nobody can ever thwart the destiny he has been apportioned. Allah had shaped the destiny of Prophet Yusuf (as) before he was even

born, and the prophet experienced that destiny in exactly the way that Allah had set it out.

We must be aware at this point that it was not the brother who enabled Yusuf (as) to survive by suggesting they throw him down a well, but that it was Allah Who prevented his death. Had Allah so wished, He might never have given that brother the idea of throwing Yusuf (as) down the well. However, it was written as Prophet Yusuf's destiny that they should have planned to murder him but then dropped him down the well instead. That was why this brother thought of the idea. The common notion of someone cheating their fate is out of the question. Prophet Yusuf's fate (as) had been determined down to the finest detail. The fact they did not kill him did not result from the fact their plan had gone wrong, but rather that Allah had planned otherwise right from the start.

In fact, Allah had revealed that plan to him in his dream when he was still a child. The life of Prophet Yusuf (as) then unfolded in such a manner as to confirm the veracity of that dream. Allah may sometimes give certain of His servants indications regarding the future. He revealed to the Prophet Muhammed (saas) in a dream that he would capture Mecca and go on a pilgrimage there with the faithful in complete safety. The verse in question reads:

Allah has confirmed His Messenger's vision with truth: "You will enter the Kaaba in safety, Allah willing, shaving your heads and cutting your hair without any fear." He knew what you did not know and ordained, in place of this, an imminent victory. (Surat al-Fath: 27)



Another representation of Prophet Yusuf's brothers. Their jealousy of the Yusuf (as) was so fierce that they were able to ruthlessly throw him into a well, despite his youth.

The key to understanding Allah's ability to reveal the hitherto "unknown" with events transpiring in exactly the way He revealed them, is to appreciate that everything that is unknown to us has already taken place in the timeless presence of Allah , and is already over and done with. The "unknown" applies to human beings. It is Allah, Who is unconfined by time and space, Who creates and knows everything. He has created all of time and all of history as a single instant.

We must not forget this truth as we move on to consider the next part of Prophet Yusuf's (as) life story. Everything that happens does so in line with the will of Allah, and for believers there is good in everything that takes place. Following every difficulty and tribulation requiring patience, Allah gives well-being and blessings in this world as well as recompense in the hereafter. For that reason, events that appear to be "evil" from the outside, such as being enslaved, thrown

into prison and slandered, are actually all auspicious for believers.

THE SLY PLAN OF THE BROTHERS

In the Qur'an, Allah reveals that Prophet Yusuf (as)'s brothers concocted a cunning plan against him, one which they then set in motion. In order to make their plan a reality they first asked their father, Prophet Ya'qub (as), to send Yusuf (as) along with them and then set about convincing him, even though they were aware that he distrusted them:

They said, "Our Father! What is wrong with you that you refuse to trust us with Yusuf when in truth we only wish him well? Why don't you send him out with us tomorrow so he can enjoy himself and play about? All of us will make sure that he is safe." (Surah Yusuf: 11-12)

As can be seen from the way the verse is expressed, their father was reluctant to send Prophet Yusuf (as) along with them and even allowed them to sense his lack of trust in them, putting them straightaway on the defensive. They maintained that they wanted only what was good for Yusuf (as). The fact that they were able to tell such a lie so easily while preparing to kill him or abandon him down a well, is evidence that mischief-making people have no difficulty in lying. In fact, they continued lying, saying that they wanted Yusuf (as) to accompany them for his own enjoyment. They also promised to protect and keep an eye on him. Another matter worthy of close attention here is the way that mischief-makers always try to portray



Prophet Yusuf's brothers around the well they threw him into. They are unaware of what awaits them as they drop him into its depths. However, everything happens according to the fate decreed by Allah.

themselves as well-intentioned. The way they claimed they wanted what was best for Yusuf (as), giving the impression they were thinking solely of his own good, was part of their cunning natures. However, Prophet Ya'qub (as) was a perceptive and wise individual and he could clearly see the untrustworthy nature of their characters:

He said, "It grieves me to let him go with you I fear a wolf might come and eat him up while you are heedless, not attending him." They said, "If a wolf does come and eat him up

when together we make up a powerful group in that case we would truly be in loss!" (Surah Yusuf: 13-14)

It was because Prophet Ya'qub (as) did not trust his sons and guessed that they would wrong Yusuf (as) that he expressed these misgivings. He guessed that they would do harm to Yusuf (as) and then come back to him after having prepared some form of excuse. They fiercely opposed this idea and tried to convince him that nothing of the sort would happen. This is another technique that people with mischief-making characters frequently resort to. In fact, their insincerity emerges in the next part of the story from the words they spoke:

That night they came back to their father in tears, saying, "Father, we went out to run a race and left Yusuf together with our things and then a wolf appeared and ate him up but you are never going to believe us now, not even though we really tell the truth." (Surah Yusuf: 16-17)

As can be seen, the course of events was just as Prophet Ya'qub (as) had expected. The behaviour of Yusuf's brothers confirmed the correctness of the doubts their father felt regarding them. The fact they came weeping was a clear sign of the corruptness of their behaviour. The fact is that such a weak attitude is one that no believer could ever accept. Since believers know that there is good and auspiciousness in everything, they never fall into the weakness of lamenting or complaining, no matter what may befall them.



In this painting can be seen Prophet Yusuf's brothers telling their father Ya'qub (as) that a wolf had eaten Yusuf (as) and showing him a bloody shirt as false evidence.

Moreover, the lamentation engaged in by Yusuf's brothers was of the kind that those of a hypocritical character employ. Using tears as a weapon to deceive the other side is one of the mischief-makers' cunning techniques. In this way they try to make other people feel sorry for them and portray themselves as helpless. They try to give the impression that they are trustworthy when they are really nothing of the sort. This is an unchanging feature of the character of the mischief-maker down the ages. The fact is that Yusuf's brothers felt not the slightest twinge of conscience as they flung their brother, a small child, into the depths of the well, yet when the time came to give an account of themselves they came weeping into their father's presence. It is obvious that they were quite insincere and that their tears were put on.

This situation is a means for believers to gain valuable in-



In a film about Yusuf (as), the brothers are shown trying to portray themselves as trustworthy, together with Prophet Yusuf's shirt which they had falsely bloodied.

sights. When careful attention is paid to the lie the brothers made up about Prophet Yusuf (as), the concern expressed by Prophet Ya'qub (as) is perfectly understandable. His sons had come with excuses, just as he himself had said. Prophet Ya'qub (as) had clearly expressed his concerns in his earlier words, saying that he was afraid of Yusuf (as) being eaten by a wolf. His sons, true to the character of mischief-makers, incorporated that concern into the lie they told to their father after throwing Yusuf (as) down the well. They thought that their father might thus be more likely to believe them. The lesson that believers need to draw from this story is to avoid expressing their sincere doubts or concerns within earshot of mischief-makers. This is because, as we have seen in this example, they might use the believers' sincere words against them.

As can be seen from the continuation of the verse, they were actually aware that their father did not believe them. This situation results from a state of mind that applies not just to Prophet Yusuf's brothers, but to everyone of a hypocritical nature. Those who set

snarers for believers feel themselves in a permanent state of guilt. They can't help thinking about their actions, and even mentioning them. They use constructions such as, "You will never believe us even though we are really telling the truth," which no honest person would ever resort to. This makes their lack of self-confidence perfectly clear, which in turn stems from their inability to display the character and moral values of the believer. In the Qur'an Allah gives an example of the mischief-makers' false and exaggerated way of speaking:

When the hypocrites come to you they say, "We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah." Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are certainly liars. They have made their oaths into a cloak and barred the Way of Allah. What they have done is truly evil. (Surat al-Munafiqun: 1-2)

As we have seen, a method of self-defence for mischief-makers is to attempt to "make their oaths into a cloak," in other words swearing something is true when it is actually false. Believers, on the other hand, trust one another's words and never feel any doubt. Furthermore, mischief-makers are unable to do believers any harm, even if they imagine that they have deceived those believers. Allah describes their situation in this verse:

Among the people there are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," when they are not believers. They think they deceive

***Allah and those who believe. They deceive no one but themselves but they are not aware of it.
(Surat al-Baqara: 8-10)***

THE BROTHERS PROVIDE FALSE EVIDENCE

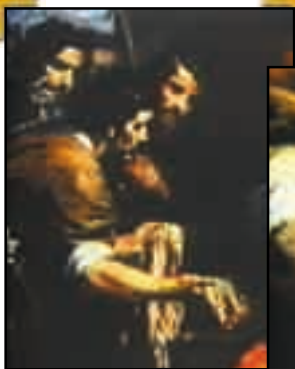
Prophet Yusuf's brothers were, in fact, perfectly well aware that they were not in the least bit credible. That was why they produced false evidence, they were hoping that it might make them seem more convincing. They covered Yusuf's shirt in blood and took it to their father, trying to give the impression that he was actually dead.

This incident is an indication that those who lay traps for Muslims are also capable of producing falsified evidence in furtherance of their conspiracies. In the light of the need to be aware of and prepared for such methods, it is essential to examine the proposed "evidence" very carefully since Allah has stipulated:

You who believe! If a deviator brings you a report, "scrutinize it carefully"... (Surat al-Hujurat: 6)

However, Prophet Ya'qub (as) very definitely refused to believe them, realised what they were up to and clearly stated that it was all a lie which they had prepared:

They then produced his shirt with false blood on it. He said, "It is merely that your lower selves have suggested something to you which



*The shirt over which
Prophet Yusuf's
brothers poured false
blood and then
showed to their fa-
ther depicted in his-
torical paintings.*

you did; ..." (Surah Yusuf: 18)

By telling his sons that their lower selves had deceived them and led them to take such actions, Prophet Ya'qub (as) was drawing attention to the fact that people can indeed do very terrible things if they follow the inclinations of their desires, that bodily appetites are deceptive and that all such evils stem from people's following those appetites. This is another fact that believers need to consider very deeply. Earthly desires lead people to evil, and everyone needs to be cautious and on guard at all times, listening to the voice of his conscience and not that of his lower self. Furthermore, another piece of

wisdom that appears in this verse is that mischief-makers are motivated by their lower selves.

One of the most striking points here is the modest behaviour of Prophet Yusuf (as). That behaviour is an important example of the way believers must place their faith solely in Allah and have fortitude, no matter what conditions they face. As we have seen, Prophet Ya'qub (as) was actually quite well aware that his sons had set a trap for Yusuf (as). However, behaving with enormous tolerance and moderation, he sought help from Allah. These words he spoke to his sons, once again reveal what a God fearing and patient individual he was:

... [For me] beauty lies in showing steadfastness. It is Allah alone Who is my Help in face of the event that you describe. (Surah Yusuf: 18)

PROPHET YUSUF (AS) IS THROWN INTO THE WELL

There is one most important matter that we must not forget as we read about the events in the life of Prophet Yusuf (as)—as he underwent these events he was always aware that Allah was by his side, and that He heard and saw his brothers as they were setting the trap for him. Allah reassured Prophet Yusuf (as):

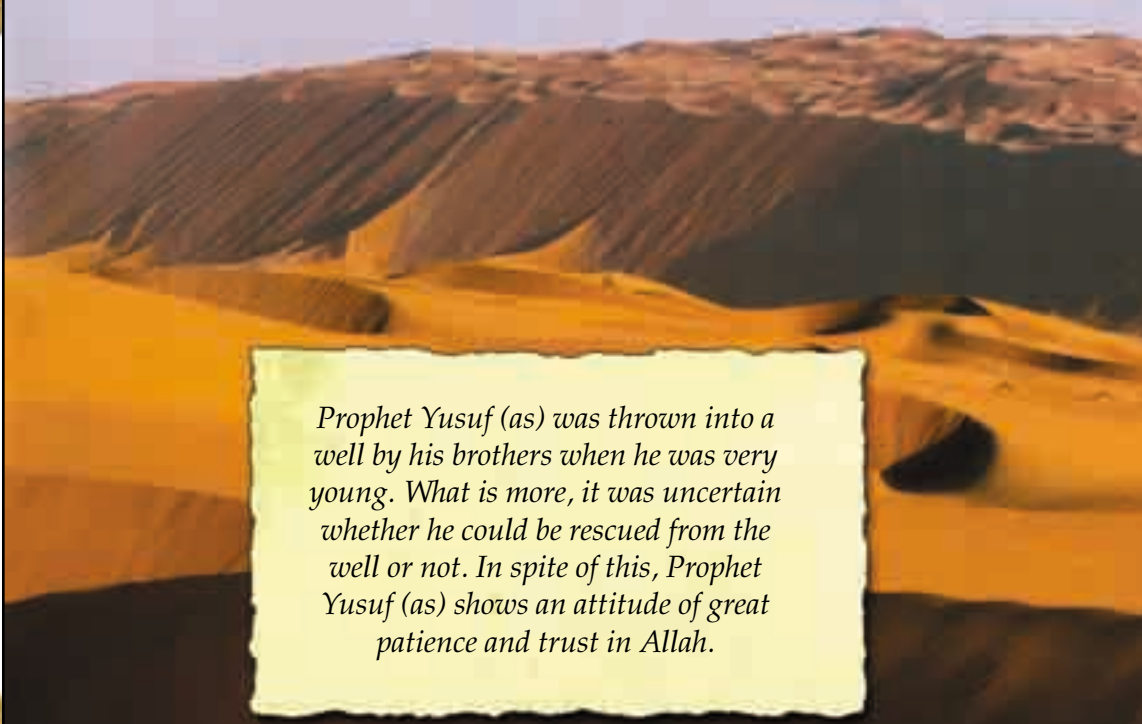
But when, in fact, they did go out with him and gathered all together and agreed to put him at the bottom of the well, We then revealed to him that: "You will inform them of this deed

they perpetrate at a time when they are totally unaware." (Surah Yusuf: 15)

The above verse emphasises two further points. The first is the way that his brothers collaborated as they threw Prophet Yusuf (as) into the well. Perhaps they imagined they could assume joint responsibility for the act but their thinking was very mistaken. Rather, their behaviour merely proves that they shared a common lack of conscience since not one of them stood out against the course of action they had taken.



***"O truthful Yusuf, tell us of seven fat cows which seven thin ones ate and seven green ears of wheat and some others which were dry so that I can return to them and let them know."
(Surah Yusuf: 46)***



Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown into a well by his brothers when he was very young. What is more, it was uncertain whether he could be rescued from the well or not. In spite of this, Prophet Yusuf (as) shows an attitude of great patience and trust in Allah.

One may conclude from this not only that troublemakers are capable of taking organised action against believers, but that they also constitute the perfect material for mass communal protests.

Moreover, it can be seen in the above verse that Allah assisted Prophet Yusuf (as) by means of His revelation, giving him news of the future even at what appeared to be his darkest hour. This is in itself a miracle. Looking at this from the point of view of Prophet Yusuf (as), this was a great blessing. Receiving a revelation from Allah when he was about to be thrown into the well and receiving Allah's reassurance was the greatest help and support that he could possibly have. In other words, right from the moment he was thrown into the well, Prophet Yusuf (as) knew by Allah's revelation to him that all their snares would come to nothing. He was secure and at peace be-



cause of his trust in Allah's promise.

However, it must not be forgotten that a sincere believer always places himself in Allah's hands, no matter what the difficulties and tribulations he faces, even if he is given no revelation, and accepts whatever happens. That is because Allah has informed the believers that He will always be by their side:

... Allah will not give the disbelievers any way against the believers. (Surat an-Nisa': 141)

Nobody who sincerely believes in this promise of Allah's can ever be concerned at the traps set by mischief-makers and unbelievers.

The superior nature of Prophet Yusuf (as) stems from his

moral values and submission to the will of Allah. Although he was still a young child, he was very mature. We need to consider what being thrown down a well would really have been like for such a small child. The verse speaks of him being thrown into the depths of the well, which means that he was somewhere dark. It was a place where the threat of death was close, and it was uncertain whether he would ever be found or not. Neither could he know what kind of people, if any, would find him, and whether they would be good or bad. Someone who lacks submission to the will of Allah may have great difficulties and be wracked by doubts in such circumstances. Yet despite all this, Prophet Yusuf (as) was patient and submissive to the will of Allah. This is a clear indication of his superior consciousness. It is also obvious from the fact that he was tested in this way at such an early age meant that he would grow up to be one of the chosen ones, since only those who are sincerely devoted to Allah and submit themselves to His will can pass such tests.

On the face of it, the circumstances in which Prophet Yusuf (as) found himself seemed truly terrifying. He was being put through a difficult trial. However, in the light of the verse, **"For truly with hardship comes ease..."** (Surat al-Inshirah: 5) Allah assisted him and made him a promise that comforted him and gave him peace and security.

PROPHET YUSUF'S NEW LIFE (as)

PROPHET YUSUF'S ESCAPE FROM THE WELL

The following verse informs us how Prophet Yusuf (as) escaped from the well:

Some travellers came that way and then dispatched their water-drawer who let his bucket down. He said, "Good news for me, I've found a boy!" They then hid him away among their goods. Allah knew very well what they were doing. (Surah Yusuf: 19)

The moment Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown into the well, and the moment he was rescued from it, were both incidents set out in his destiny. Nothing happens outside one's predetermined destiny. For that reason the caravan that would come past after Yusuf (as) had



The bottom two pictures show the traveling caravans en route to Egypt. The map shows the route taken by the caravans of the time, and the drawing in the centre depicts the caravan's water-gatherers pulling Prophet Yusuf (as) out of the well.



been thrown into the well, its destination and the kind of people in it had all been set out by the predetermination of Allah before the prophet (as) was even born. Believers who grasp this important truth are always submissive to the will of Allah because of it.

As can be seen from this verse, the group that found Prophet Yusuf (as) in the well and rescued him thought that they would be able to sell him, and regarded him as a piece of merchandise. That was because the system of slavery was then still prevalent in Egypt and the surrounding area. People actively engaged in the trade,



Top left; an image of Prophet Yusuf (as) being sold into slavery for a cheap price. Top right; A representation of the slavery current in Egypt at the time. Right; A document of the time giving information about slavery in Egypt.

They sold him for a pittance, a few small coins, considering him to be of little worth. (Surah Yusuf: 20)



Bottom; The surviving remains of an Egyptian slave market. Side; The slave market from a film about the life of Prophet Yusuf (as).



buying and selling children in particular. That was why the people who found him had such cause to celebrate at the prospect of making commercial gain out of him. However, the continuation of the verse reveals that they underestimated his value and sold him on cheaply:

They sold him for a pittance, a few small coins, considering him to be of little worth. (Surah Yusuf: 20)

There is actually great wisdom in this state of affairs. If they had placed a high value on him, if they had realised that he was a chosen figure, a prophet, they would have wanted to harm him. Similarly, other unbelievers who came to hear of it would also wish to do him wrong. The fact that they underestimated him and sold him into slavery in expectation of a material profit actually worked out in his favour.

The wisdom behind this episode in the life of Prophet Yusuf (as) lies in the way it indicates the great benefit and protection for the believers that is hidden in the general tendency of unbelievers to underestimate them, regarding them as insignificant and inconsequential.

There is another noteworthy point here. As we know, Prophet Yusuf (as) was known for his extraordinary beauty. Yet as we have seen, this beauty had not yet become apparent at the time he fell into the slave traders' hands. They failed to see what a valuable individual he was, describing him merely as a "child." That means that Allah in His wisdom had concealed his beauty at that time, which was yet another manifestation of His help and protection.

According to the Qur'an, Prophet Yusuf (as) was found by



Examples of the splendid buildings in Egypt from the time of Prophet Yusuf (as).

the slave traders and sold to an Egyptian. This is related as follows:

The Egyptian who had bought him told his wife, "Look after him with honour and respect. It's possible he will be of use to us or perhaps we might adopt him as a son." And thus We established Yusuf in the land to teach him the true meaning of events. Allah is in control of His affair. However, most of mankind do not know. (Surah Yusuf: 21)

By means of this Egyptian who bought him, Allah ensured that Prophet Yusuf (as) was protected, well cared for and allowed to grow up settled in Egypt. His purchaser entrusted him to his wife in a very kind and compassionate manner, advising her to take good care of him. Actually, they thought that Yusuf (as) could be very useful to them and even thought of adopting him. This is still further evidence of Allah's help, support and love and compassion for the prophet (as).



A mural depicting scenes from the daily life of the time.

Allah rescued him from the perils of the well, settled him in a favourable place and made Egypt his home. All of these things were blessings from Allah.

Furthermore, Allah gave Prophet Yusuf (as) knowledge, teaching him to interpret people's words. There is no doubt that this is a great ability, and at the same time a blessing, which Allah confers on such of His servants as He chooses. The verse concerned states:

He gives wisdom to whoever He wills and he who has been given wisdom has been given great good...(Surat al-Baqara: 269)

HE IS SLANDERED WHEN HE REACHES MATURITY

Thus it was that Prophet Yusuf (as) began to live with the Egyptian, Aziz. As well as teaching him to interpret people's words, Allah also gave him judgement and knowledge when he reached maturity. The judgement referred to in the relevant verse is the ability to reach a just decision compatible with the strictures of Allah. Knowledge, on the other hand, may be the knowledge of learning or else perhaps the ability to perceive the inner aspects of things (Allah knows best, of course). These are all indications that Allah had singled him out for his upright behaviour and blessed him. This truth is described in the Qur'an as follows:

***And then when he became a full-grown man,
We gave him knowledge and right judgement
too. That is how We reward all doers of good.
(Surah Yusuf: 22)***

However, when Prophet Yusuf (as) reached maturity, the lady of the house he lived in, Aziz's wife, wanted to seduce him. A suitable environment was prepared to that end, all the doors were tightly locked and an improper suggestion made to the prophet (as). His response in these circumstances is a model of virtuous conduct for all believers to aspire to.

First and foremost, although the woman desired him, he sought refuge in Allah rather than commit such an ugly sin, which would have been a violation of Allah's sanctions. He then behaved in a loyal and civilised manner, reminding the woman of Aziz and saying that he had looked after him and treated him well. In this way, he



A depiction of the wife of the Egyptian official who attempted to "solicit" Prophet Yusuf (as), in the words of the Qur'an.

made it absolutely clear that he could commit no such act of disloyalty to Aziz. Immediately after that he stated that the wrongdoers could not hope for salvation and that this would be cruel behaviour. The Qur'an relates the episode as follows:

The woman whose house it was wanted to seduce him. She barred the doors and said, "Come over here!" He said, "Allah is my refuge! He is my Lord and has been good to me with where I live. Those who do wrong will surely not succeed." She wanted him and he would have wanted her, had he not seen the clear proof of his Lord. That happened so We might avert from him all evil and lust. He was Our chosen servant. (Surah Yusuf: 23-24)

As is clear from the above verses, Prophet Yusuf (as) knew that adultery was a sin in the sight of Allah. He therefore avoided transgressing and tried to escape from the woman. The way that Allah indicates that he would have wanted her, contains a very important secret regarding this particular test. It is possible for a believer's lower self to turn in the direction of something that is sinful according to his religion. The important thing is for the believer to refuse to submit to that desire and to demonstrate the determination not to go beyond the limits Allah set. There would have been no test if he had had no physical desires. The subsequent events are related in the following verses:

They raced to the door. She tore his shirt at the back. They met her husband by the door. She said, "How should a man whose intention was to harm your family be punished for what he did except with prison or painful punishment?" (Surah Yusuf: 25)



A depiction of the virtuous behaviour of Prophet Yusuf (as) in the face of the woman's improper suggestion. She is tearing the back of Prophet Yusuf's shirt (as).

Following this incident, the woman began slandering Prophet Yusuf (as), despite his virtuous behaviour and avoidance of adultery. Even though he was completely innocent, she told her husband, the vizier, that Yusuf (as) had approached her with evil intentions, demanding that he either be thrown into prison or else suffer torture. This is a clear indication that the woman had no fear of Allah and possessed a cruel streak. The improper suggestion she made to Yusuf (as) was in any case the most important indication of her corrupt nature. The way that she made these false allegations and wanted him to be punished, despite his innocence, was simply an expression of that fundamental corruptness. Prophet Yusuf (as) responded in this way:

He said, "It was she who tried to seduce me." A witness from her people then declared, "If his shirt is torn in front, she speaks the truth and he has clearly told a shameless lie. If his shirt is torn at the back, then she has lied and he has clearly told the simple truth." (Surah Yusuf: 26-27)

In this situation, the fact that the woman had torn the back of Prophet Yusuf's shirt is evidence that he had fled in the direction of the door, with the woman chasing after him. According to the verses, the prophet's innocence had been proven:

He saw the shirt torn at the back and said, "The source of this is women's deviousness. Without a doubt your guile is very great.

Yusuf, ignore all this, and you, my wife, should ask forgiveness for your evil act. There is no doubt that you are in the wrong." (Surah Yusuf: 28-29)

Aziz realised that Prophet Yusuf (as) was innocent and said that this was all a trick of his wife's. His words, as related in the above verses, are evidence that Aziz had more conscience than his wife. Yet the incident did not end there. The subsequent developments are related in the Qur'an:

Some city women said, "The governor's wife solicited her slave. He's fired her heart with love. We see that she's the one to blame." (Surah Yusuf: 30)

As we see, the incident spread among the women of the city. The way that attention is drawn to the women in the verse may be intended to show how ignorant people's lack of moral virtues goes hand in hand with either a gossiping or mischief-making nature. (Allah knows best, of course.)

The women in the city then began to speak against the vizier's wife, condemning her actions. They realised that the guilty party was not Prophet Yusuf (as) but Aziz's wife, who was made uneasy by the criticism of her. In fact, people who ignore the good pleasure of Allah and aim to please other people instead, are the most fearful of being belittled in the public eye and spoiling their image. One of the things these people, who have no fear of Allah are actually most afraid of, is that the things they do in secret are discovered by

others. That was the position Aziz's wife found herself in.

When Aziz's wife realised that she had become the target of gossiping women she prepared a trap for them. The aim here was to show that she was not entirely to be blamed for succumbing to her immoral urges with respect to Prophet Yusuf (as), because he was such an extraordinarily beautiful man. Indeed, the other women were amazed at Prophet Yusuf's beauty:

But when she heard of their malicious talk, she sent for them and made a sumptuous meal and then she gave a knife to each of them. She said [to Yusuf], "Go out to them." When they saw him, they were amazed by him and cut their hands. They said, "Allah preserve us! This is no man. What can this be but a noble angel here!" (Surah Yusuf: 31)

As the above verse shows, the beauty of Prophet Yusuf reminded the women of Allah, and had no choice but to call upon Him spontaneously in the face of such loveliness. They regarded his beauty as something superhuman and even claimed that he was an angel. If we recall, Allah had hidden Prophet Yusuf's striking beauty when he was a child, thus protecting him (as). As time passed, however, and Prophet Yusuf (as) reached maturity, that beauty began to attract considerable attention. There is very definitely great wisdom concealed within each one of these details. The continuation of the story reveals what took place next:

She said, "You see! It's him you blamed me for.

I tried seducing him but he refused. If he does not do what I order him, he will be put in prison and brought low." (Surah Yusuf: 32)

As we can see, the woman openly confessed her guilt and admitted that Prophet Yusuf (as) had wanted to protect his chastity. Yet she also repeated that same ugly proposition in front of a large group of people, commanding Prophet Yusuf (as) to go along with her, and threatened him with prison and public humiliation if he refused to comply. It can be seen from this just how cruel and bereft of moral integrity this woman was. This is of course a most astonishing situation. Maybe it was the woman's confidence in her position in Egypt, in her wealth, and the fact that Prophet Yusuf (as) was her slave, that impelled her to commit this sin. This was a most depraved suggestion, and Aziz's wife had no compunction about repeating it in front of everyone present. This is proof both of her own lack of religious values and of the other women's looseness in religious matters. In the same way that no devout woman could ever embark on such a transgression, so no devout woman could ever stand by and watch while something of that sort happened. Moreover, the women described in the story remained silent in the face of the threats uttered by the vizier's wife and turned a blind eye to her ugly actions.

The Qur'an also relates how Aziz raised no objection to Prophet Yusuf (as) being thrown into the dungeon, even though he had seen all the evidence. In the same way his wife turned a blind eye to Yusuf's years of imprisonment (as). As can be seen from this example, non-believers always support people of a similar frame of mind, and are able to sit back and watch and remain silent while evil plans are hatched and set in motion. We see how the city women in the

story preferred to remain silent, thus making them accomplices in the plot. They did not even support Prophet Yusuf (as) when Aziz's wife confessed, but sat back and watched as a virtuous man was thrown into gaol.

Another noteworthy element here is Prophet Yusuf's sincerity. He immediately sought refuge in Allah and sincerely opened his heart to Him and begged for help. Great sincerity and purity of heart are exemplified by his behaviour:

He said, "My Lord, the prison is preferable to me than what they call on me to do. Unless You turn their guile away from me, it may well be that I will fall for them and so become a man of ignorance." His Lord replied to him and turned away from him their female guile and deviousness. He is the One Who Hears, the One Who Knows. (Surah Yusuf: 33-34)

The most striking aspect of this part of the story is the women's resort to setting traps. One of the lessons to be drawn from this episode is that believers need to be on their guard against ignorant women in such matters. Since they are unmindful of what is lawful and unlawful and are unaware of the bounds Allah set for various reasons, they are liable to transgress in order to satisfy their pride; sometimes from submission to their physical desires and sometimes from an intention to place believers in a difficult position. Such women can sometimes lay snares for male believers, but we must make it clear, however, that we are not referring to all women here, only ignorant ones with no fear of Allah.

THE INNOCENT YUSUF (AS) IS THROWN INTO A DUNGEON

As we have already seen, the wife of Aziz admitted in front of the women of the city that it was she who had had designs on Prophet Yusuf (as) and that he had rejected her. Aziz was of the same opinion, reminding his wife that she was a sinner who needed to beg Allah for forgiveness. In other words, everyone who witnessed or heard about these events knew that Prophet Yusuf (as) was innocent and a victim of the woman's scheming ways. Despite that however, they came to a decision devoid of all conscience and threw Prophet Yusuf (as) into a dungeon:

Then, after they had seen the Signs, they thought that they should still imprison him for a time. (Surah Yusuf: 35)

The most important point here is that they were able to throw a completely innocent person into prison. What emerges from this is that the system that prevailed in that society at that time was not one of justice, but one in which might was regarded as right. Moreover, the fact that they were able to imprison someone who was entirely guiltless and whom the evidence showed to be completely innocent, demonstrates that theirs was a legal system that they were able to manipulate at will in their own interests.

This is part of the immutable pattern of Allah ; unbelievers, especially those who reject His messengers, always seek to imprison and place obstacles in the way of believers. The same thing happened in the time of our Prophet, Muhammad (saas). Allah describes this truth in these terms:



Prophet Yusuf (as) spent long years in a dungeon despite the fact that his innocence had been clearly proved. The above picture shows an Egyptian prison of the time.

When those who disbelieve were plotting against you to imprison you or kill you or expel you: they were plotting and Allah was plotting, but Allah is the Best of Plotters. (Surat al-Anfal: 30)

As can be seen, this situation that Muslims and the messengers of Allah have faced in every age was also inflicted on Prophet Yusuf (as). Had Prophet Yusuf (as) not been a Muslim, and had he bowed his head to their superstitious and morally degenerate system, then they would not have been so hostile towards him, and would even have turned a blind eye had he committed a crime. However, the main reason for their enmity towards him was the fact that he was an im-

maculate Muslim who valued above all else the good pleasure of Allah, and firm adherence to His commandments and prohibitions. As we are told in several Qur'anic verses, people far removed from the religion have always harboured a similar hostility towards believers.

In the same way that the throwing of the innocent Prophet Yusuf (as) into the dungeon shows what an unjust legal system prevailed in Egypt, it also indicates the moral degeneration that was present in society as a whole at the time.

"ALL PLOTTING BELONGS TO ALLAH"

Superficially, the events we have so far described might be regarded as "disasters" experienced by Prophet Yusuf (as). A look at the heart of the matter, however, shows that it was Allah who brought all of this about and ordered events. As we stated earlier, these incidents were all part of Prophet Yusuf's predetermined destiny, and were all highly auspicious for him (as). Indeed, someone who undergoes such a test as being innocently imprisoned and yet remains patient and submissive to the will of Allah under such conditions, is someone who possesses true God consciousness. It is clear that such a person will gain the love and good pleasure of Allah. From that point of view, Prophet Yusuf's imprisonment was very far from being an evil thing or a tragedy; it was, on the contrary, a most positive occurrence.

Furthermore, this story draws attention to the way that unbelievers or mischief-makers come together to set traps for believers. These people, however, as we have already made clear, can never ac-

tually harm true believers. There is a trap set within the all encompassing scheme of Allah which surrounds the traps they set for others. As they lay their snares, Allah hears and knows everything they say, their decisions and innermost feelings, down to the finest detail. In fact, the fact that they will set snares for believers was already enshrined in their destinies long before they were even born. Allah had also determined in their destinies those events that would bring their traps to nothing. For that reason, every trap set for believers comes into being as a failure. Allah reveals this secret in the Qur'an:

Those before them plotted but all plotting belongs to Allah. He knows what each self earns, and the disbeliever will soon know who has the Ultimate Abode. (Surat ar-Rad: 42)

They concocted their plots, but their plots were with Allah, even if they were such as to make the mountains vanish. Do not imagine that Allah will break His promise to His Messengers. Allah is Almighty, Exactor of Revenge. (Surah Ibrahim: 46-47)

Thus it is that believers are submissive to the will of Allah when they encounter such situations, and realise that the traps laid for them have already been neutralised. No matter how powerful the snare set for them they always respond calmly and moderately. This stems from their trust in Allah and their belief in His Books and His Messengers. Therefore, it is a secret peculiar to believers, since it is impossible for people who do not believe and who live their lives far removed from religion, to enjoy such inner calm.

YUSUF'S DAYS IN THE DUNGEON (as)

THE PROPHET YUSUF (AS) AND HIS CELLMATES

The Qur'an informs us that two other young men were thrown into the dungeon along with Prophet Yusuf (as), and that they asked him to interpret their dreams:

Two servants entered prison along with him. One said, "I dreamt that I was pressing grapes." The other said, "I dreamt I carried bread upon my head and birds were eating it. Tell us the true meaning of these dreams. We see that you're one of the righteous." (Surah Yusuf: 36)

It will be recalled that Allah had taught Prophet Yusuf (as) to interpret people's words. That was why his cellmates asked him to interpret their dreams. One point is worthy of note here: How did they



The verses speak of two young men entering the dungeon together with Prophet Yusuf (as). These two can be seen in the picture above.

know that Prophet Yusuf (as) possessed such knowledge and wisdom?

The statement in the next part of the verse shows the answer to this question; the others in the dungeon said that they saw him as **"one of the righteous."** This shows that throughout his time in prison Prophet Yusuf (as) behaved like a true believer, which influenced the people around him. It appears that Prophet Yusuf's behaviour, nature and external appearance were all of a kind to inspire confidence in others. In fact, even someone's facial expression can make people around sense that he is a true believer. When Allah refers to believers in the Qur'an, He speaks: **"... Their mark is on their faces, the traces of prostration..."** (Surat al-Fath: 29)

The marks from prostration referred to here are probably not restricted to the physical marks which result from long hours of prayer, but also include "the light of faith" that illuminates a person's

face (Allah knows best, of course).

The uprightness displayed by Prophet Yusuf (as) in the dungeon shows us an important quality of believers; the believer displays the same impressive integrity wherever he may be. That is because believers live to earn the good pleasure of Allah, and Allah is everywhere in His knowledge. Allah is always with the believer, whether in prison, at home, walking in the street, writing at his desk, eating or watching the television. He enfolds the believer and knows



These ancient Egyptian pictures describe the dreams of the two young men who were imprisoned with Prophet Yusuf (as). The top picture shows the young man preparing wine. Underneath can be seen the bird eating the bread the young man was carrying on his head.

everything he says or that passes through his mind. That is why a believer's preference for good behaviour and morals does not change according to his situation. Believers constantly strive to exhibit a consistently high standard of morality and conscience.

That was why Prophet Yusuf's cellmates trusted him (as), saw that he was a good person and sought his advice. Prophet Yusuf (as) began to speak after they had made their request. As will be seen from the verses below, however, he trod a very intelligent path in doing so. He directed the flow of talk in the direction he considered most appropriate, and dealt with what he regarded as the more important and pressing issues before moving on to the subjects that most interested them:

He said, "No meal to feed you will arrive before I have informed you what they mean. That is part of what my Lord taught me. For I have left the religion of a people who clearly have no faith in Allah and disbelieve about the world to come. I hold fast to the creed of my forebears Ibrahim and Ishaq and Ya'qub. We don't associate anything with Allah. And that is how Allah has favoured us and all mankind, but most do not give thanks. My fellow-prisoners, are many lords better, or Allah, the only One, the Conqueror? What you serve apart from Him are only names which you and your forefathers have made up. There is no mandate

for them from Allah. Allah alone is qualified to judge. His order is to worship none but Him. That is in truth the straight and upright religion, but most of mankind simply do not know. (Surah Yusuf: 37-40)

As can be seen, Prophet Yusuf (as) told them of the oneness of Allah and the evils of polytheism. He explained the twisted nature of the system of ignorance in which they lived and recommended that they serve Allah alone.

While he spoke, he also gave examples of past prophets, recalling how they had all been part of the same Divine religion.

He also asked questions to encourage the people he was speaking with to think. For example, he asked, "... are many lords better, or Allah, the only One, the Conqueror?" at the same time recalling Allah's name as the Conqueror. Thus he tried both to get them to think and to have awe of the glory of Allah.

He then recalled the idols that his listeners worshipped, saying that these were nothing but superstitions, false idols inherited from the time of their ancestors that lacked any evidence of authenticity. He explained that it was a sin to worship anything other than Allah, and that most people were unaware of this, and then invited them to the true path.

The steps taken by Prophet Yusuf (as) illustrate the kind of sound approach that should be employed when explaining Islam to people. Recognizing the opportunity that presented itself in their desire to broach the subject, he first explained what he wished to speak about in some detail. Having done this, he then moved on to answer-



Stone carvings depicting the studies and books on the science of dream interpretation in Egypt and Mesopotamia during that period.

ing their question regarding the interpretation of their dreams:

"My fellow-captives, one of you will serve his lord with wine, the other of you will be crucified and birds will eat his head. The thing you asked about is foreordained." He said to the one of them he knew was saved, "Please mention me when you are with your lord," but satan made him forget to remind his lord, and so he stayed in prison for several years. (Surah Yusuf: 41-42)

Careful attention to the second verse shows that Prophet Yusuf (as) actually behaved rather intelligently. After speaking about the



A bust of one of Prophet Yusuf's cellmates.

interpretation of their dreams, he told the one of his two cellmates who would be saved to remind his lord about him. This was a very shrewd strategy intended to secure his release from the dungeon. Yet Prophet Yusuf (as) was also aware that there were limits to what he might achieve and that he would only leave the prison when Allah so willed.

In fact, as can be seen in the last part of the verses quoted above, satan caused that individual to forget Prophet Yusuf (as), who spent many long years incarcerated. However, the prophet also knew that this was the most advantageous outcome. This was actually a test calling for patience, and there is no doubt that spending long years in prison and even being forgotten would be very hard for most people. Yet Prophet Yusuf (as) here confirms the superiority of his moral values and faith, greeting everything that happened to him with submission to the will of Allah.



One day, the ruler wished to have one of his dreams interpreted. He sought out the most reputable seers and wise men in the country. The incident is depicted in the picture above.

THE PLOT AGAINST PROPHET YUSUF (AS) IS REVEALED

As related in the Qur'an, Prophet Yusuf (as) spent long years in the dungeon. One day, however, the ruler wished to have one of his dreams interpreted. The best-known seers and wise men in the country were summoned for the purpose. Yet they all said that the ruler's dream was very confused and were unable to interpret it. A short while after, however, one of Prophet Yusuf's former cellmates remembered him:

The King declared, "I dreamt of seven fat cows which seven thin ones ate and seven green ears of wheat and some others which were dry. O counsellors! Explain my dream to me if you are those who can interpret visions!" They said,



When the most famous seers and wise men in the country failed to interpret the ruler's dream, Prophet Yusuf's cellmate who had been released from prison remembered Yusuf (as) and suggested his lord visit the prison to meet him. This is depicted in the relief above and the painting below.



"A jumbled mass of mixed-up dreams! We do not know the meaning of such things." The one of them who had been saved then said, remembering after a period, "I will tell you what it signifies, so send me out." (Surah Yusuf: 43-45)

It appears that events unfolded in a totally unexpected way and that Prophet Yusuf (as), who had been forgotten in the dungeon

for so long, had finally been remembered. It was actually written in Prophet Yusuf's destiny that he would only be remembered after so many years had gone by, which is why events took the course they did. It was Allah Who sent the ruler his apparently confused dream, inspired in him the desire to have it explained to him, did not allow anyone to interpret it satisfactorily, and caused the former prisoner to remember Prophet Yusuf (as). Allah had determined all these things in advance. The Qur'an goes on to describe how events unfolded:

"O truthful Yusuf, tell us of seven fat cows which seven thin ones ate and seven green ears of wheat and some others which were dry so that I can return to them and let them know."
(Surah Yusuf: 46)

The way his cellmate addressed Prophet Yusuf (as) is of particular interest, "O truthful Yusuf " We can see from this expression that people could easily perceive the uprightness and pleasing manner of the true believer which characterised Prophet Yusuf (as). Like every prophet, Prophet Yusuf's behaviour expressed his own certainty and inspired confidence in those who encountered him. His former cellmate was aware of his capacities, and approached him seeing that he was truthful and trustworthy. When they met, he asked for an interpretation of the ruler's dream. Prophet Yusuf (as) provided an interpretation in these terms:

He said, "Sow for seven years in the normal way and leave that which you harvest in the ear except for a small amount from which you



The interpretation of the Egyptian ruler's dream by Prophet Yusuf (as) as depicted in various Christian sources.

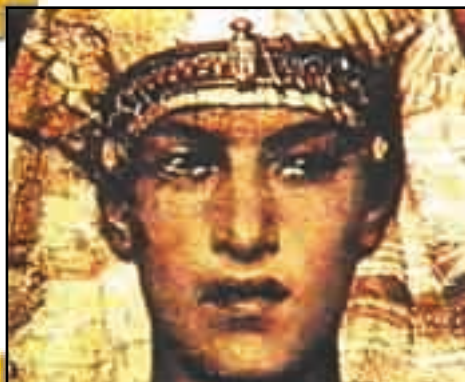


The King declared, "I dreamt of seven fat cows which seven thin ones ate and seven green ears of wheat and some others which were dry..."
(Surah Yusuf: 43)

eat. Then after that seven hard years will arrive in which you can eat from what you set aside for them, except for a little which you store. Then after that another year will come in which the people will be helped by rain in plenty and when they once more will press."
(Surah Yusuf: 47-49)

When the ruler learned how Prophet Yusuf (as) had interpreted his dream he called him into his presence. When the ruler's messenger came to Prophet Yusuf (as), the prophet employed a very intelligent strategy. In order for it to emerge that he had been thrown into prison and slandered although he was entirely guiltless, and in order that the truth should come out, instead of obeying the summons at once, he sent the messenger back to the ruler with a series of questions that would cause the matter to be looked into again. He enquired after the women who had cut their hands, who were witnesses to Prophet Yusuf's innocence and to Aziz's wife's lack of chastity. They were all first-degree witnesses, although the kind of environment in which they could give evidence had not existed previously. For that reason, Prophet Yusuf (as) used this opportunity most wisely. The incident is described as follows:

The King said, "Bring him to me straight away!" But when the envoy came to him, he [Yusuf] said, "Go back to your master and enquire of him what happened about the women who cut their hands. My Lord has knowledge



Representations of the Egyptian ruler of the time.

of their cunning guile." (Surah Yusuf: 50)

In response to Prophet Yusuf's question, the ruler gathered the women together and asked for the truth of the matter:

He said, "What was this past affair of yours when you solicited Yusuf?" Then they said "Allah forbid! We know no bad of him." The governor's wife then said, "The truth has now emerged. Indeed I tried to seduce him then and he has simply told the honest truth." (Surah Yusuf: 51)

After so many years the truth finally emerged. It was realised that the women had set a trap for Yusuf (as) and that he had acted with virtue in the face of the woman's ugly proposition. However, the years he had spent in prison, even though his innocence was quite obvious, were by no means a loss or misfortune. Allah had already planned every moment he experienced, and that plan con-

tained great compassion and good. Being in the dungeon had served as a vehicle for Yusuf's spiritual education (as) and in order for him to grow in depth and maturity. He drew close to Allah by means of his pleasing attitude. All troubles and difficulties in this world are recompensed in the hereafter. Allah promises those of his servants who are patient in the face of difficulties in this world, those who submit and are grateful to Him, even in the most difficult conditions, a pleasing life in the hereafter and His good pleasure.

Furthermore, the time Prophet Yusuf (as) spent in the dungeon was also a vehicle for another auspicious matter, since Allah had so ordered the political environment in Egypt that it became a means whereby he was able to come to power.

When we look at the next episode in the story, we see that after the women confessed the truth Prophet Yusuf (as) said to the intermediary:

"In this way he [the vizier] may know at last that I did not dishonour him behind his back and that Allah most surely does not guide the deviousness of the dishonourable. I do not say my self was free from blame. The self indeed commands to evil acts-except for those my Lord has mercy on. My Lord, He is Forgiving, Merciful." (Surah Yusuf: 52-53)

The striking point here is that Prophet Yusuf (as) again reminded those around him of Allah. He said that Allah never allows the treacherous plans of those who set cunning traps to succeed, and that He eventually causes the truth to surface. This is an important point,

because the slanders against Prophet Yusuf (as) came to light by Allah's permission. The ruler and the people learned the truth at the moment and in the manner Allah desired. The destiny Allah determined went into effect and gave rise to the best and most favourable scenario.

Yet what Prophet Yusuf (as) says in the above verses is also most important. Despite the truth being out in the open, his being the victim of an obvious slander, his spending so many years in prison and being a servant raised to the status of prophet by Allah, Prophet Yusuf (as) did not attempt to deny the vulnerability of his own lower self. He also revealed another most important truth here; "The self indeed commands to evil acts — except for those my Lord has mercy on " This is something that believers need to bear in mind at every moment of their lives. That is because every human being has earthly desires, and all people are tested at every moment throughout their lives. One's desires may sometimes clash with one's conscience, and a person will listen to the one or the other. Believers strive with the very greatest determination to heed the voice of their consciences which call them to what is pleasing to Allah, while other people live at the mercy of their desires.

If a believer loses sight of his task and succumbs to his desires he must repent and be more on his guard against the evils of those desires. That is because, as Allah has informed us in the Qur'an by means of the words of Prophet Yusuf (as), earthly desires always command one to commit evil acts.

YUSUF'S TIME AS GOVERNOR IN EGYPT (as)

PROPHET YUSUF (AS) IS GIVEN POWER AND INFLUENCE

After the ruler had learned the truth a new period began for Prophet Yusuf (as). The ruler told his men to bring Yusuf (as) to him, and when he arrived he gave him an important position at his side, making him a trusted advisor. This is related as follows in the Qur'an:

The King said, "Bring him to me straight away! So I may draw him very close to me." When he had spoken with him, he declared, "Today you are trusted, established in our sight." He [Yusuf] said, "Entrust the country's stores to me. In truth I am a knowing guardian." And thus We established Yusuf in the land so he could live in any place he pleased. We grant Our grace to anyone We will

and We do not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good. But the wages of the hereafter are the best for people who believe and fear their Lord. (Surah Yusuf: 54-57)

To recall, Prophet Yusuf (as) had gone to Egypt as a slave, after which he had been thrown into a dungeon on the ugly and baseless charge of lusting after a woman. However, Allah brought about a change that would have appeared "impossible" on the surface, making Prophet Yusuf (as) a man whose word counted in the Egyptian government. Bringing to pass that which on the face of it might seem quite impossible, belongs to the realm of Allah's wisdom and vastness. As we are informed in the Qur'an: "**How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by Allah's permission!**" (Surat al-Baqara: 249)



According to ancient Egyptian sources, rulers would give the people they appointed to run the treasury a ring such as this. Prophet Yusuf (as) was very probably given a ring like this as a symbol of his power and rank.

He said, "Sow for seven years in the normal way and leave that which you harvest in the ear except for a small amount from which you eat. Then after that seven hard years will arrive in which you can eat from what you set aside for them, except for a little which you store. Then after that another year will come in which the people will be helped by rain in plenty and when they once more will press."

(Surah Yusuf: 47-49)



The ancient Egyptian pictures above depict the seven years of plenty before the famine.



Images of agricultural land before and during the famine from a film about the life of Prophet Yusuf (as).



A wall relief depicting the starving people of Egypt.



The ancient Egyptian inscriptions from 1700-1550 BC describe in great detail the seven years of famine during the time of Prophet Yusuf (as).

As a miracle of faith for believers, Allah rescues them from situations that appear very difficult or impossible and opposes those who deny Him. The only duty falling to a believer is never to abandon his belief in Allah's promise and always to submit to the will of Allah and to trust in Him.

For people who live their lives far removed from religion, the highest points to which they can aspire is to possess strength and power in this world, to own goods and wealth and to influence how the latter is spent. This is the aim for which they struggle and to which they devote their lives. As we have seen, however, Allah freed Prophet Yusuf (as) from the dungeon and endowed him with all these blessings at once. That is where the wisdom lies in Allah's recalling the hereafter at the end of the verse, right after He has given Prophet Yusuf (as) power, influence and property.

We are thus reminded that the possessions and rank conferred in this world are of no importance, and that what we need to set our sights on is the hereafter. However, in the final sentence of the verse, as we are reminded of this matter and informed that the recompense to be given in the hereafter will be most beneficial, we are also told that this applies to believers and the God fearing. It is therefore out of the question for those who lack these characteristics to hope for a pleasant recompense in the afterlife. In this way, Allah turns people's gaze in the direction of the hereafter.

People are shown another very important fact in the life story of Prophet Yusuf (as). Allah reveals this in the Qur'an:

"For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hardship comes ease." (Surat al-Inshirah: 5-6)



Historical paintings bringing to life the seven hard years of famine.



A relief and a painting showing the Egyptian government storing away part of the harvests from the years of plenty and the distribution of provisions during the time of famine.

As we are informed in this sura, Allah promises believers that in the wake of every trial He has provided ease.

The life of Prophet Yusuf (as) is full of such examples. The way he was rescued from the well and brought up in a good family, and the way he was appointed to the Treasury from the dungeon are all clear evidence of how Allah follows every trouble and difficulty with comfort and relief.

PROPHET YUSUF (as) AND HIS BROTHERS MEET AGAIN

As we have seen, Prophet Yusuf (as) became responsible for the Egyptian Treasury. A short while later, those brothers who had thrown him into the well came to Egypt for reasons of trade and were brought into his presence, but they failed to recognise him. He, on the other hand, immediately recognised them and prepared a very subtle plan. He offered them certain provisions and assured them of his generous hospitality, thus calculating that he would be able to influence them into doing what he wanted. That his true aim was actually to recover his younger brother can be seen from the following verses:

The brothers of Yusuf came into his presence and he knew them but they did not know him. Then, having supplied their needs, he said to them, "Bring me your brother, your father's youngest son. Do you not see that I dispense full measure and am the most hospitable of hosts? But if you do not bring him here to me, your measure from me then will be denied and you will not come near to me at all." (Surah Yusuf: 58-60)

It can be seen from this that Prophet Yusuf (as) encouraged them in their desires by making it clear that he was a just man. This went perfectly according to plan. Furthermore, he made it clear that unless they brought their brother to him they would not gain what



Thanks to Prophet Yusuf's foresightful management, provisions were distributed in exchange for capital during the years of famine. People poured into Egypt to engage in trade. The painting above and the ancient Egyptian images to the right depict that trade.



they had come for and neither would they be granted another audience. In this way he aroused in them the worrying prospect of possible difficulties.

In fact, the effect of Prophet Yusuf's words (as) on his brothers was seen immediately. Given his power and magnificence they were convinced that his were not empty words and decided to do everything in their power to bring their brother:

***They said, "We will request our father for him.
That is something we will surely do." (Surah
Yusuf: 61)***

The strategy adopted here by Prophet Yusuf (as) was most ingenious. Had he not offered them a material advantage in this way, had he not imposed a number of conditions, they might have acted reluctantly and they would not have produced their brother. Therefore, Yusuf (as) did not leave matters entirely up to them, but prepared a plan they had no hope of resisting.

Alongside all these intelligent measures, Prophet Yusuf (as) took yet another step to guarantee matters. Before his brothers left Egypt he placed the money he had received from them in return for supplies secretly back among their loads. By giving them both the supplies and the money that they had paid for them he provided them with yet another material advantage. This incident is described in the sura:

***He told his serving men, "Put back their goods
into their saddlebags for them to find when
they arrive back to their families so that per-***



Years later, the brothers who had thrown Prophet Yusuf (as) into the well came into his presence again to take provisions. This painting depicts that moment.

haps they will return again." (Surah Yusuf: 62)

There is a nugget of wisdom here that believers need to draw from this succession of steps; when one reaches an agreement with people whose consciences cannot be trusted and who are weak in faith and morals, it is important to take all possible measures against the possibility of their breaking that agreement and to ensure they do that which is required of them. It is not the action of a believer to leave the course of events up to the other side, in other words to leave the initiative with those weak in faith.

THE BROTHERS MAKE A REQUEST OF THEIR FATHER

It is a well-known fact that one characteristic of ignorant people is their deep attachment to material things and the way they bow their heads to everyone and everything that can bring about advantages for them. Yusuf's brothers could not bear to think of losing the material possibilities he had set before them. As soon as they departed from Egypt they went to their father's side and asked him to

give them their little brother, promising that they would protect him:

Then when they got back to their father's house, they said, "Father! Our measure has been denied. Please send our brother with us so we may obtain our measure. We will take care of him." (Surah Yusuf: 63)

However, their father did not trust them:

He said, "How will my trusting him to your care be different from entrusting his brother before? The Best of Guardians, however, is Allah. He is the Most Merciful of the merciful." (Surah Yusuf: 64)

Close inspection will reveal that both Prophet Ya'qub (as) and Prophet Yusuf (as) generally remembered and praised Allah immediately after speaking. This is an example for believers, showing that they must remember Allah at all times and never forget Him.

However, the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (as) possessed a fierce longing for material gain. For this reason, they went to enormous lengths to talk their father around:

Then when they opened up their saddlebags and found their merchandise returned to them, they said, "Our father! What more could we ask! Here is our merchandise returned to us. We can provide our families with food, and

guard our brother and get an extra load. That is an easy measure to obtain." (Surah Yusuf: 65)

Since Prophet Ya'qub (as) did not trust his other sons he asked them to promise that they would bring their brother back:

He said, "I will not send him out with you until you make a covenant with Allah to bring him home unless you are overwhelmed." When they had made their covenant, he said, "Allah is Guardian over what we say." (Surah Yusuf: 66)

The reminder issued by Prophet Ya'qub (as) that Allah was a witness to this contract and that he made Allah his Guardian are important examples of wisdom. This shows us that asking people who are weak in faith to swear on the name of Allah is an effective means of guiding them towards that which is better for them, this is because if they have even a little fear of Allah they will bear that in mind and behave honestly.

After having extracted a certain promise from his children, Prophet Ya'qub (as) told them to act with caution and to enter Egypt through different gates:

He said, "My sons! You must not enter through a single gate. Go in through different gates. But I cannot save you from Allah at all, for judgement comes from no one but Allah. In Him I put my trust, and let all those who put their

trust, put it in Him alone." (Surah Yusuf: 67)

This advice that Prophet Ya'qub (as) gave his sons is exceedingly important. These verses draw attention to the fact that believers must always act with caution, calculate any possible dangers and take the appropriate precautions.

At the same time, however, Prophet Ya'qub (as) again reminds us of the essence behind everything. He says that it is Allah who lays this down, that if Allah wills something there is no way to prevent it and that it is necessary to submit to His will. These are exceedingly valuable reminders. Here can be seen the idea of submission to the will of Allah that Muslims need to adopt in its fullest sense. The popular ideas of fate and submission are actually mistaken. Some people imagine that events arise because of measures that they have taken, or that they can cause other things to happen. Others possess a mistaken concept of submission to the will of Allah, along the lines of, "What is going to happen is already preordained, so there is no need for us to do anything." Both are mistaken. People are responsible for taking the appropriate steps in whatever situation they encounter, to set causes in motion, but not to forget that the outcome is in the hands of Allah. Of course precautions will not determine the outcome of anything, yet they need to be taken carefully and scrupulously as an act of faith.

Prophet Ya'qub (as) was a complete believer, and was fully conscious of this secret. The way that he called upon Allah whenever he spoke and considered the hidden aspect of matters is an indication of his God fearing nature. We are told in one verse that Prophet Ya'qub (as) was a servant possessed of knowledge:

But when they entered as their father said, it did not save them from Allah at all, yet a need in Ya'qub's soul was satisfied. He had knowledge which We had taught him, but most of mankind simply do not know. (Surah Yusuf: 68)

PROPHET YUSUF (AS) MEETS HIS LITTLE BROTHER

The brothers of Prophet Yusuf (as) came to Egypt, bringing their little brother with them, and again came into the presence of the prophet. Here, Prophet Yusuf (as) separated his little brother from the others and revealed his true identity:

Then when they entered into Yusuf's presence, he drew his brother close to him and said, "I am your brother. Do not be distressed concerning all the things they used to do." (Surah Yusuf: 69)

It appears from Prophet Yusuf's words that his brothers had been doing things to cause him difficulty and distress. This is yet another indication of the way their characters were far removed from religion.

After meeting his younger brother, Prophet Yusuf (as) made the rather shrewd move of calling him to his side. He thus rescued his little brother from the hardships which the other brothers were causing him. Prophet Yusuf's ingenuity is described in the following terms in the Qur'an:

Then when he had supplied them with their needs, he put the goblet in his brother's bag. A herald called out, "Caravan! You are thieves!" They turned to them and said, "What are you missing?" They said, "We're missing the goblet of the king. The man who brings it will get a camel's load. Regarding that I stand as guarantor." They said, "By Allah, you know we did not come to corrupt the land and that we are not thieves." They said, "What is the reparation for it if it in fact transpires that you are liars?" They said, "Its reparation shall be him in the saddlebags of whom it is discovered. With us that is how wrongdoers are repaid." He [Yusuf] started with their bags before his brother's and then produced it from his brother's bag. In that way We devised a cunning scheme for Yusuf. He could not have held his brother according to the statutes of the King-only because Allah had willed it so. We raise the rank of anyone We will. Over everyone with knowledge is a Knower. (Surah Yusuf: 70-76)

Under the laws of Egypt, Prophet Yusuf (as) could not have kept his brother with him, yet he was able to do so thanks to the plan

he set in motion. According to this plan, he concealed a goblet in his brother's belongings. One of his men then called out to them in such a manner as to place them into a psychological state of guilt and alarm. On top of that, it was declared that the bowl belonged to the ruler and that whoever found it would be given a full camel-load as a reward. The impression was thus created that this was a major incident, thereby preventing any suspicion that it was all a deliberate ploy.

Later still, he asked them what the punishment might be if the bowl were discovered to be in their possession. Under the law, the owner of the bag in which the bowl was found would be arrested and detained. Yet in order not to make it apparent that this was all a ploy, he did not look in his little brother's belongings first, but began searching the others' possessions.

When the bowl was found amongst their little brother's possessions, the others immediately accepted the situation, accused him of being a thief, and repeated an earlier calumny regarding Prophet Yusuf (as):

They said, "If he steals now, his brother stole before."... (Surah Yusuf: 77)

Yet his brothers actually knew full well that he would not steal, that he was an honest person. According to the moral standards set out in the Qur'an, believers must think well of one another and protect each other from slander. The fact that the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (as) did not defend their innocent younger brother and actually implicated the prophet himself, is an indication of their false and hypocritical natures.

Prophet Yusuf (as) behaved with the greatest patience in the



*Pictures showing the ruler's lost goblet being found
in the baggage of Prophet Yusuf's brother.*

face of this situation:

They said, "If he steals now, his brother stole before." But Yusuf kept it to himself and still did not disclose it to them, saying, "The plight that you are in is worse than that. Allah knows best the matter you describe." (Surah Yusuf: 77)

Prophet Yusuf's attitude here is an example of both submission to the will of Allah and of great intelligence. Most ignorant people become annoyed whenever they hear the slightest word spoken against themselves and react in an emotional manner. Prophet Yusuf (as), however, kept his thoughts concealed, as the verses tell us, in other words, he did not allow his innermost feelings to be sensed by others. The events which follow are related below:

They said, "Your Eminence! He has an old and



The moment the goblet was found, from a film about the life of Prophet Yusuf (as). Under normal circumstances Yusuf (as) would not have been unable to keep his brother by him, yet the plan he conceived enabled him to do this.

venerable father, so take one of us instead of him. We see without a doubt that you are of the people who do good." He said, "Allah forbid that we should take anyone but him with whom our goods were found. In that case we would clearly be wrongdoers."When they despaired of him, they went apart to talk alone. The eldest of them said, "You know full well your father had you make a covenant with Allah concerning this, and how before you failed him with Yusuf. I will not leave this land until I have permission from my father, or Allah decides about the case on my behalf.

Truly He is the justest Judge of all." (Surah Yusuf: 78-80)

Here it is seen that one of Prophet Yusuf's brothers had slightly more conscience than the others. In fact, a similar situation had arisen at the time when Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown into the well and most of his brothers wanted to kill him, at which one of them said: "Do not take Yusuf's life but throw him to the bottom of the well, so that some travellers may discover him, if this is something that you have to do." (Surah Yusuf: 10). Maybe these two were actually one and the same individual (Allah knows best). What we are comparing here is an interesting human character; a character that understands with its conscience that what is going on around it is sinful, but which fails to stand up to these events sufficiently and is only able to put up a modest opposition. Even though this is a much more positive model than cruel people with no conscience at all, it is still highly deficient and lacking when compared to the character of a sincere believer.

The character of the believer is of a kind that requires swift and immediate intervention when it sees behaviour contrary to the religion of Allah, or cruelty, or lack of conscience. The believer is never helpless, never falls under the spell of "group psychology" or under the influence of the cruel majority around him, and never makes compromises on what is right. He will never deviate from the path of Allah, even if everyone around him does.

The conversation between the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (as) is related in the Qur'an in these terms:

Return now to your father and say to him,

"Your son stole, father. We can do no more than testify to what we know and we are not the guardians of the Unseen. Ask questions of the town in which we were and of the caravan in which we came for we are surely telling you the truth." He said, "It's merely that your lower selves suggested something to you which you did. But [for me] beauty lies in steadfastness. Perhaps Allah will bring them all together. He is indeed All-Knowing and All-Wise." (Surah Yusuf: 81-83)

On close examination, the brothers really did believe that their little brother had engaged in theft. Yet as we have already seen, it was a grave error for them to think in such terms. They should have known that a believer would never, ever do such a thing, and they should have thought the best of their brother and assumed that there had been some kind of mistake. In fact, Prophet Ya'qub (as) behaved in just the manner one would have expected of a believer. He never admitted the slightest possibility that his son might be a thief, since he knew that he was a believer, one who feared Allah. As well as this, since he knew that the morals of his other sons were far removed from those of religion, he refused to trust them and assumed that their own unscrupulous dealings lay at the root of the matter, that it was some trick of theirs. Prophet Ya'qub's submission to the will of Allah here is another example of the upright conduct befitting a believer. Although he believed that what had happened to his son was a mistake of some sort and that there was a trick involved somewhere, he immediately

turned to Allah and patiently sought His help. Again, he made it clear that what befitted him was patience. Prophet Ya'qub (as) never lost hope. He even hoped that Allah would reunite him with Yusuf (as) and his other son in the near future.

Moreover, believing that there is something auspicious in every event is one of the most defining characteristics of believers. That there was something auspicious in the other brothers' belief that the youngest had stolen the goblet, is borne out by the fact that they were thereby easily persuaded to leave the youngest brother behind in Egypt without creating any difficulties for Prophet Yusuf (as).

Prophet Ya'qub (as), on the other hand, knew this secret, that is, that Allah created everything and made them favourable for believers. In fact, the most striking aspect of his attitude is the way that he does not link the events to material causes, does not think with a superficial logic of cause and effect, and knows that everything is very definitely under the control of Allah. This example shows that believers must never abandon their hope in Allah, no matter what happens, no matter how difficult the conditions. They must always be full of hope and call upon Allah for help.

However, Prophet Ya'qub (as) was in an interesting position. Despite knowing that Allah created everything, he did not hesitate to feel sorrow as regards Prophet Yusuf (as) and his brother. That was his test. So testing was the experience, in fact, that as revealed in the Qur'an, his eyes turned white from grief over Prophet Yusuf (as), that is to say, he went blind. His sons warned him that he might fall sick because of the sorrow he felt, or even die:

***He turned himself away from them and said,
"What anguish is my sorrow for Yusuf!" And***

then his eyes turned white from hidden grief. They said, "By Allah, you will not ever cease to mention Yusuf, till you will be exhausted or will be ready to die!" He said, "I make complaint about my grief and sorrow to Allah alone because I know things from Allah you do not know." (Surah Yusuf: 84-86)

It is indicated in these verses that sorrow can lead to serious illness. In fact, in many places in the Qur'an, Allah tells people not to feel sorrow or sadness. When that stricture is not adhered to, negative consequences can be seen at once. Apart from the psychological effects of sorrow, it also brings with it serious physical consequences, such as a darkening under the eyes, tension in the face, the hair going grey, bodily collapse etc.

As the episode continues, Prophet Ya'qub (as) asked his sons to go and bring him news of Prophet Yusuf (as) and his brother:

"My sons! Seek news of Yusuf and his brother. Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who are disbelievers." (Surah Yusuf: 87)

Worthy of note here is the fact that Prophet Ya'qub (as) was sure that Prophet Yusuf (as) was still alive. The reason for that certainty may perhaps have been a special knowledge Allah imparted to him. As is revealed in the Qur'an, Allah is able to give his prophets and messengers such things as powerful sensory perception, exceptional wisdom, consummate insight, superior foresight and the ability

to see future events. For that reason it is necessary to rely on those to whom such knowledge is given, to trust in and abide by them.

Another fact emphasised in this verse is that believers must always be hopeful under all circumstances. Prophet Ya'qub (as) never lost hope that he would see Prophet Yusuf (as) and his brother, and he advised his sons never to abandon hope in Allah. Loss of hope in Allah is a state of mind fit for unbelievers, not the faithful.

PROPHET YUSUF (as) IS RECOGNISED BY HIS BROTHERS

The Qur'an describes the meeting of Prophet Yusuf (as) with his brothers as follows:

So when they came into his presence, they said, "Your Eminence! Hardship has hit us and our families. We bring scant merchandise, but fill the measure for us generously. Allah always rewards a generous giver." (Surah Yusuf: 88)

The attitude adopted by the brothers at the end of the above verse is particularly worthy of note. After begging Prophet Yusuf (as) to be generous towards them, they recall Allah and the fact that He will reward those who give generously. This is an indication of their hypocritical behaviour, because despite living in a way that is contrary to religion and the good pleasure of Allah, and their forgetting Allah during the course of their actions, they recall Him when their inter-

A picture showing Prophet Yusuf (as) revealing his true identity to his brothers. They remembered what they had done, repented and confessed their mistake.



ests are at stake.

The fact that Allah loves those who truly seek His good pleasure is revealed in the Qur'an, and of that there is no doubt. On the other hand, those people who ignore what is pleasing to Allah and only call on him when their own interests are at stake, still imagine that they can influence others in spite of this attitude.

In the following verse Prophet Yusuf (as) hinted at his own identity in the face of this request for help by his brothers, without taking any interest in what they said. This is how he enabled them to understand who he actually was:

He said, "Are you aware of what you did to Yusuf and his brother in ignorance?" They said, "Are you Yusuf?" He said, "I am indeed Yusuf, and this here is my brother. Allah has acted graciously to us. As for those who fear Allah and are steadfast, Allah does not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good." They said, "By Allah, Allah has

favoured you above us. Clearly we were in the wrong." (Surah Yusuf: 89-91)

As can be seen from the statements in these verses, Prophet Yusuf's brothers managed to surmise that they were dealing with Prophet Yusuf (as) himself, declaring their regret and the fact that they had committed an error. They accepted that Allah had singled Yusuf out (as), and that He had chosen him over them. An important point is being emphasised here: the power of choice belongs to Allah. This fact is also revealed in the Qur'an, in the words, "Your Lord creates and chooses whatever He wills. The choice is not theirs..." (Surat al-Qasas: 68)

Prophet Yusuf (as) gave his brothers the following reply:

He said, "No blame at all will fall on you. Today you have forgiveness from Allah. He is the Most Merciful of the merciful." (Surah Yusuf: 92)

As can be seen from the verse above, despite the fact that Prophet Yusuf (as) was in a position to have punished his brothers or treated them badly, he did not question them, but rather said that he did not condemn them. In fact, he even asked Allah for forgiveness for them, reminding them that Allah was the Most Merciful of the merciful.

This behaviour on the part of Prophet Yusuf (as) is an example to all the faithful. Ignorant people are inspired by hatred in such situations, and act with the logic of revenge. Believers, on the other hand, decline to insist on their own personal rights, as was the



A Christian picture of the brothers regretting their past deeds.

case with Prophet Yusuf (as), and know that it is forgiving behaviour that finds favour in the sight of Allah. This is in line with the verse, "Make allowances for people, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant." (Surat al-A'raf: 199). They forgive wicked behaviour and demonstrate superior moral virtues by countering evil with good.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF PROPHET YUSUF (AS)

Following those words to his brothers, Prophet Yusuf (as) gave them his shirt, asking them to take it to their father:

"Go with this shirt of mine and cast it on my father's face and he will see again. Then come to me with all your families." And when the caravan went on its way, their father said, "I can smell Yusuf's scent! You probably think I have become senile." They said, "By Allah! Your mind is still astray." (Surah Yusuf: 93-95)

This verse demonstrates that his family thought that Prophet Ya'qub (as) had committed an error because of the way he missed his son. There is a wise lesson to be borne in mind which arises from this attitude of theirs; it is often a mistake to make judgements in the light of external appearances and causes. That is because Allah has spoken in the Qur'an of actions which are taken based upon knowledge that is specially granted. For example, this matter is illustrated in some detail in the episode of Prophet Musa's encounter (as) with a servant of Allah possessed of special knowledge. (For further details, see Harun Yahya's *The Prophet Musa (as)*, Millat Book Centre, June, 2002). Allah had in any case revealed that Prophet Ya qub (as) was a servant possessed of special knowledge. His family failed to understand his behaviour which was adopted on account of that knowledge, and approached matters from a superficial perspective, believing him to be in error.

In fact, after receiving the shirt, Prophet Ya'qub (as) reminded his family of the special knowledge Allah imparted to him:

***But when the bringer of the good news came,
he cast it on his face and sight returned. He
said, "Did I not say to you before, I know
things from Allah you do not know?" (Surah
Yusuf: 96)***

As we have seen, the words previously spoken by Prophet Yusuf (as) came to pass; when they wiped the shirt over their father's face his sickness left him, and his eyes began to see again. He thus regained his health. In addition, Prophet Ya qub's words came true. He had seen and felt beforehand that he would see Yusuf again. This is a true indication that both were servants possessed of special knowledge.

PROPHET YUSUF'S DREAM COMES TRUE (as)

PROPHET YUSUF (AS) IS REUNITED WITH HIS FAMILY

When Prophet Ya'qub (as) received the news, along with the evidence to support it, that Yusuf (as) was alive, the lie that his brothers had kept concealed for so long came to light. They had told their father that he had been killed and eaten by wolves, whereas Yusuf (as) was actually still alive. When this emerged, his children begged Prophet Ya'qub (as) to forgive them:

They said, "Our father, may we be forgiven for all the many wrongs that we have done. We were indeed greatly mistaken men." He said, "I will ask my Lord to pardon you. He is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Surah Yusuf: 97-98)

On close inspection, Prophet Ya'qub (as) said he would seek forgiveness not immediately but at a later time. Why should Prophet Ya'qub (as) not have sought forgiveness for his children straight away?

The wisdom in this may have been that he wished to see what their subsequent behaviour and attitude would be. He may have wanted to see whether they had really abandoned the error of their ways and were truly sincere. For that reason, it may be that he would pray for them when he had formed that opinion (Allah knows best, of course).

Yet as is made clear at the end of the verse, Prophet Ya'qub (as) also reminded them of Allah's compassionate and forgiving nature. He did that so that they might hope for forgiveness from Allah and turn to Him in sincere repentance.

The subsequent developments are related in the Qur'an in these terms:

***Then when they entered into Yusuf's presence,
he drew his parents close to him and said,
"Enter Egypt safe and sound, if Allah wills."
(Surah Yusuf: 99)***

The first thing Prophet Yusuf (as) did when he met his family was to hold them to his breast and remind them that they were

*Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land as He made those before them successors, and will firmly establish for them their religion with which He is pleased and give them, in place of their fear, security. "They worship Me, not associating anything with Me." Any who disbelieve after that, such people are deviators.
(Surat an-Nur: 55)*

safe. It can be seen from this verse that embracing someone is a sincere expression of love. Reassuring someone that they are safe is a delicate gesture that allows them to relax. It must have been exceedingly reassuring for these people who had come on a long journey and experienced many vicissitudes to know that they were now comfortable and secure. This is exemplary behaviour for believers to follow. Putting a guest, a stranger or someone under one's roof at ease by assuring them that they are free to enjoy the safety and comfort of one's land or home is a beautiful gesture to which attention is drawn in the Qur'an.

Neither were the hospitality and subtlety of Prophet Yusuf (as) limited to this. The respect that Yusuf (as) showed his parents is described as follows in the Qur'an:

He raised his parents up onto the throne.

They fell prostrate in front of him... (Surah Yusuf: 100)

Sitting his mother and father on a throne is a delightful expression of respect. They were older than him, and furthermore his father was a prophet whom Allah had strengthened with knowledge. They displayed great humility in the face of Yusuf's respectful behaviour (as).

Careful examination reveals that despite the fact that Prophet Yusuf (as) was their son and that they were much older than him, they treated him with great humility. It is stated in the verse that his family prostrated themselves before him. This must have been a widespread demonstration of respect according to the customs of the time, there is of course no implication of "worship" here. Among ig-

norant people in such circumstances pride enters into the equation and the parties involved hesitate to behave in a sincere and respectful manner. In ignorant societies people strongly avoid any expression of respect such as bowing, particularly to anyone who happens to be younger than them. However, the behaviour of Prophet Yusuf (as) and his family was based on respect, love and humility. This is a clear illustration of what a believing family should be like.

In this climate then, Prophet Yusuf (as) described everything that had befallen him and revealed the flawless workings of Allah's plan:

... "My father, truly this is now the interpretation of the dream I had. My Lord has made it all come true; and He was kind to me by letting me out of prison and brought you from the desert when satan had caused dissent between me and my brothers. My Lord is kind to anyone He wills. He is indeed All-Knowing and All-Wise." (Surah Yusuf: 100)

It will be recalled that Prophet Yusuf (as) had dreamt of eleven stars, the sun and moon prostrating themselves before him. The fact that years later his position was such that his mother, father and brothers showed him great esteem and bowed down before him out of respect, and the fact that his brothers in particular came into his presence when they had need of him was the fulfilment of that dream.

Further scrutiny again reveals that while Prophet Yusuf (as) was explaining all this, he called on Allah and praised His name, and he also explained that the events so far undergone by him and his fam-

ily had all taken place as part of Allah's plan. This is the kind of exemplary understanding and speech that a believer should adopt.

Another characteristic of Prophet Yusuf (as) that is noteworthy here is the way in which he saw the positive side of everything and interpreted everything in a favourable manner. For example, he said that Allah had done him a kindness and freed him from the dungeon. This is very literally the kind of attitude befitting a believer, and proof that he looked at things with a positive and optimistic expectation. Prophet Yusuf (as) thus made it clear that he was on the side of Allah and avoided any kind of speech or behaviour that was negative or unappreciative of anything Allah creates. The fact that he said, **"My Lord is kind to anyone He wills. He is indeed All-Knowing and All-Wise"** is a demonstration of this. In this way, Prophet Yusuf (as) sets an example to all of the faithful.

THE SINCERE PRAYER OF PROPHET YUSUF (as)

Throughout this book we have discussed how exceedingly devoted to Allah Prophet Yusuf (as) was, how well protected he was by Him, and how often he called upon and gave thanks to Him. This can be seen in the following verse in which Allah inspires him with the following words:

"My Lord, You have granted power to me on earth and taught me the true meaning of events. Originator of the heavens and earth, You are my Friend in this world and the Next.

So take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous." (Surah Yusuf: 101)

As we have seen, Prophet Yusuf (as) was aware that all the attributes he possessed, both the material benefits and his knowledge and reason, had been given to him by Allah . Those who deny true religion, on the other hand, believe that they acquire everything through their own efforts, thus magnifying themselves in their own eyes and displaying ingratitude for Allah's blessings.

Prophet Yusuf's prayer (as) as recorded in the above verse is another expression of his faith and fear of Allah. Despite being a prophet chosen by Allah, he wishes to die as a believer and join the community of the righteous. Nothing is taken for granted with respect to his position in the hereafter. He has a genuine fear of Allah and calls upon Him in his need.

This is the kind of understanding and behaviour befitting a believer. Those who regard themselves as worthy of the Garden, who claim that as beloved servants of Allah they will definitely be saved in the hereafter, and who belittle other people in their pride, are in a heedless state. The true believer, on the other hand, is always submissive in the face of Allah , is always mindful of jeopardising His good pleasure, and acts with the humility this awareness brings with it.

The duty of every Muslim is to be a sincere, submissive, devout and humble believer, just like Prophet Yusuf (as) and to pray with all sincerity, "So take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous."

CONCLUSION

Throughout this book we have been examining the life of Prophet Yusuf (as) in the light of the details given in the Qur'an. Our only reliable source of knowledge about his life is that provided for us by Allah. Beyond that, we have absolutely no right to add or subtract even a single word. Allah has in fact indicated this, revealing that everything that has been related regarding Prophet Yusuf (as) actually consists of unknown things. The story of Prophet Yusuf (as) concludes with these words:

***This is news of the Unseen which We reveal to you. You were not with them when they decided what to do and devised their scheme.
(Surah Yusuf: 102)***

In revealing this information to us, Allah both teaches us important wisdom, which we can use in our own lives, and has also made it easier for us to take the prophets of the past as role models by

allowing us to become acquainted with them. With the exception of true dreams (which as we have seen from the evidence of Prophet Yusuf's own life, are not ordinary or everyday occurrences), we have no opportunity of actually seeing Prophet Yusuf (as), Prophet Ya'qub (as) or any other prophet while we remain in this world. However, careful reading of the Qur'an and deep consideration of the lives of the prophets, seeing the environment they lived in and their exemplary behaviour clearly in our minds eye and striving to understand it, may allow us to become acquainted with the prophets and to make use of their superior perceptiveness, spirituality and nearness to Allah.

Everyone who reads this book must therefore reflect upon it carefully. They must consider the wisdom of the prophets Ya'qub (as) and Yusuf (as) and work out how to make that wisdom part of their daily lives. If a person abandons hope in the face of the troubles and woes that befall him, or if he says, "This is going to be very difficult to put right, there is nothing we can do," when he sees the plight of Muslims, then we should know that this is terrible heedlessness. We should remember the patience, determination and firm, unshakeable faith in Allah of Prophet Yusuf (as), who was thrown down a well, then sold cheaply as a slave, slandered, imprisoned for no crime and abandoned there for years. That is how to rid oneself of defeatism and despair. We must remember that in spite of the calamitous events that befell Prophet Yusuf (as) that seemed to be so great on the surface, he was freed from them in a moment by the generosity and mercy of Allah, and secured a great blessing.

Never forget that in the present day, just like in the time of Prophet Yusuf (as), there is a flawless Divine plan operating in every single event, and that Allah creates everything that happens under His

Conclusion

good auspices and wisdom. Do not forget that Allah has power over all things, and that He always helps those who have faith and are sincerely devoted to Him, who devoutly seek to serve Him and follow His Messenger (saas). He gives believers blessings at times when they are least expected, and helps them in unforeseen ways. A human being's sole duty is to worship Allah on the basis of these truths, and to live his life accordingly.



THE EVOLUTION DECEPTION

Every detail in this universe points to a superior creation. By contrast, materialism, which seeks to deny the fact of creation in the universe, is nothing but an unscientific fallacy.

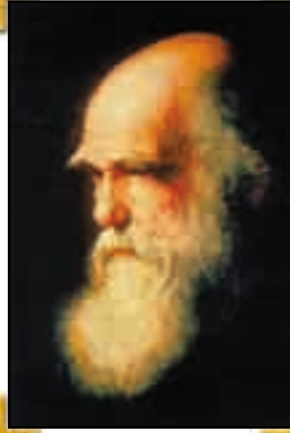
Once materialism is invalidated, all other theories based on this philosophy are rendered baseless. Foremost of them is Darwinism, that is, the theory of evolution. This theory, which argues that life originated from inanimate matter through coincidences, has been demolished with the recognition that the universe was created by Allah. American astrophysicist Hugh Ross explains this as follows:

Atheism, Darwinism, and virtually all the "isms" emanating from the eighteenth to the twentieth century philosophies are built upon the assumption, the incorrect assumption, that the universe is infinite. The singularity has brought us face to face with the cause — or causer — beyond/behind/before the universe and all that it contains, including life itself.¹

It is Allah Who created the universe and Who designed it down to its smallest detail. Therefore, it is impossible for the theory of evolution, which holds that living beings are not created by Allah,

but are products of coincidences, to be true.

Unsurprisingly, when we look at the theory of evolution, we see that this theory is denounced by scientific findings. The design in life is extremely complex and striking. In the inanimate world, for instance, we can explore how sensitive are the balances which atoms rest upon, and further, in the animate world, we can observe in what complex designs these atoms were brought together, and how extraordinary are the mechanisms and structures such as proteins, enzymes, and cells, which are manufactured with them.



Charles Darwin

This extraordinary design in life invalidated Darwinism at the end of the twentieth century.

We have dealt with this subject in great detail in some of our other studies, and shall continue to do so. However, we think that, considering its importance, it will be helpful to make a short summary here as well.

THE SCIENTIFIC COLLAPSE OF DARWINISM

Although a doctrine going back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made the theory the top topic of the world of science was the book by Charles Darwin titled *The Origin of Species* published in 1859. In this book, Darwin denied

that different living species on the earth were created separately by Allah. According to Darwin, all living beings had a common ancestor and they diversified over time through small changes.

Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties of the Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve the "Difficulties of the Theory." However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties.

The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory can by no means explain how life originated on the earth.
- 2) There is no scientific finding showing that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of the suggestions of the theory of evolution.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

THE FIRST INSURMOUNTABLE STEP: THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive earth 3.8 bil-

lion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask with regard to the first step in this alleged evolutionary process: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and does not accept any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. This, however, is a claim inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"LIFE COMES FROM LIFE"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, the theory asserting that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, worms developing in meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, only some time later was it understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but



One of the evolutionists' gravest deceptions is the way they imagine that life could have emerged spontaneously on what they refer to as the primitive earth, represented in the picture above. They tried to prove these claims with such studies as the Miller experiment. Yet they again suffered defeat in the face of the scientific facts; the results obtained in the 1970s proved that the atmosphere on what they describe as the primitive earth was totally unsuited to life.

were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even in the period when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, which disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said, "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."²

Advocates of the theory of evolution resisted the findings of

Pasteur for a long time. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

INCONCLUSIVE EFFORTS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the 20th century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930's, he tried to prove that a living cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession: "Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms."³

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve the problem of the origin of life. The best known of these experiments was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, the atmosphere used in the experiment having been very different from real earth conditions.⁴

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁵



All the evolutionist efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended with failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth Magazine* in 1998:

*Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?*²⁶

THE COMPLEX STRUCTURE OF LIFE

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even the living organisms deemed the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of the technological products produced by man. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10950 for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 1050 is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of the cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. It is calculated that if the information coded in DNA were written down, this would make a giant library consisting of 900 volumes of encyclopaedias of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: the DNA can only replicate with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can only be realized by the information coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means. ⁷

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was "created" in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

IMAGINARY MECHANISMS OF EVOLUTION

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mechanisms" were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of "natural selection." The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By*

Means Of Natural Selection

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*⁸

LAMARCK'S IMPACT

So, how could these "favourable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science in his age. According to the French biologist Lamarck, who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation and these traits, accumulating from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, according to Lamarck, giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples, and in his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁹

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Mendel and

verified by the science of genetics that flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favour as an evolutionary mechanism.

NEO-DARWINISM AND MUTATIONS

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930's. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings because of external factors such as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favourable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings present on the earth formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms such as the ears, eyes, lungs, and wings, underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they always cause harm to them.

The reason for this is very simple: the DNA has a very complex structure and random effects can only cause harm to it. The American geneticist B.G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For exam-

ple, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer). No doubt, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself" as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, neither could any imaginary process called evolution have taken place.



Crippled babies who were born in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. This picture reveals that mutations, which evolutionists claim have an effect on the origins of living things, actually have disastrous effects on human beings.

THE FOSSIL RECORD: NO SIGN OF INTERMEDIATE FORMS

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to the theory of evolution, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else in time and all species have come into being in this way. According to the theory, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, then numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

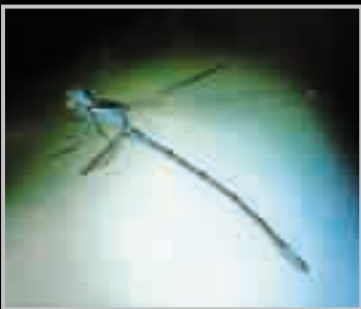
If such animals had really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

*If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.*¹¹

LIVING FOSSILS REFUTE EVOLUTION



450-million-year-old horseshoe crab from the Ordovician Period.



150-200-million-year-old dragonfly fossil from the recent Jurassic Period.



100-150-million-year-old fossil shrimp from the Cretaceous Period.

The fossil record is a great barricade in front of the theory of evolution. The fossil record shows that living species emerged suddenly and fully-formed without any evolutionary transitional form between them. This fact is evidence that species are created separately.



The theory of evolution claims that living species gradually evolved from one another. The fossil record, however, explicitly falsifies this claim. For example, in the Cambrian Period, some 550 million years ago, tens of totally distinct living species emerged suddenly. These living beings depicted in the above picture have very complex structures. This fact, referred to as the "Cambrian Explosion" in scientific literature is plain evidence of creation.

DARWIN'S HOPES SHATTERED

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All the fossils unearthed in excavations showed that, contrary to the expectations of evolutionists, life appeared on earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find over and over again not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*¹²

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, it is very strong evidence that living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor can be that this species was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

*Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.*¹³

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the earth. That means that "the origin of species"

is, contrary to Darwin's supposition, not evolution but creation.

THE TALE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

The subject most often brought up by the advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that the modern men of today evolved from some kind of ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, it is claimed that there existed some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

1. *Australopithecus*
2. *Homo habilis*
3. *Homo erectus*
4. *Homo sapiens*

Evolutionists call the so-called first ape-like ancestors of men "Australopithecus" which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various Australopithecus specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, has shown that these belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹⁴

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to the evolutionist claim, the living beings in the Homo series are more developed than Australopithecus. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved



The most important element of the propaganda campaign evolutionists conduct by means of the media is the way the utterly fictitious heroes of their accounts are depicted as ape-like creatures. The aim behind these imaginary representations, that rest on no scientific basis whatsoever, is to misinform the public and lead them to believe in evolution.

*that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the most important proponents of the theory of evolution in the twentieth century, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."*¹⁵

*By outlining the link chain as "*Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*," evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings*



of paleoanthropologists have revealed that Australopithecus, Homo habilis and Homo erectus lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁶

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as Homo erectus

*have lived up until very modern times. Homo sapiens neanderthalensis and Homo sapiens sapiens (modern man) co-existed in the same region.*¹⁷

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. A paleontologist from Harvard University, Stephen Jay Gould, explains this deadlock of the theory of evolution although he is an evolutionist himself:

*What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.*¹⁸

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is sought to be upheld with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific foundation.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years, and particularly studied Australopithecus fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science." He formed a spectrum of sciences ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific" that is, depending on concrete data fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far

end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception" concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible—and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹⁹

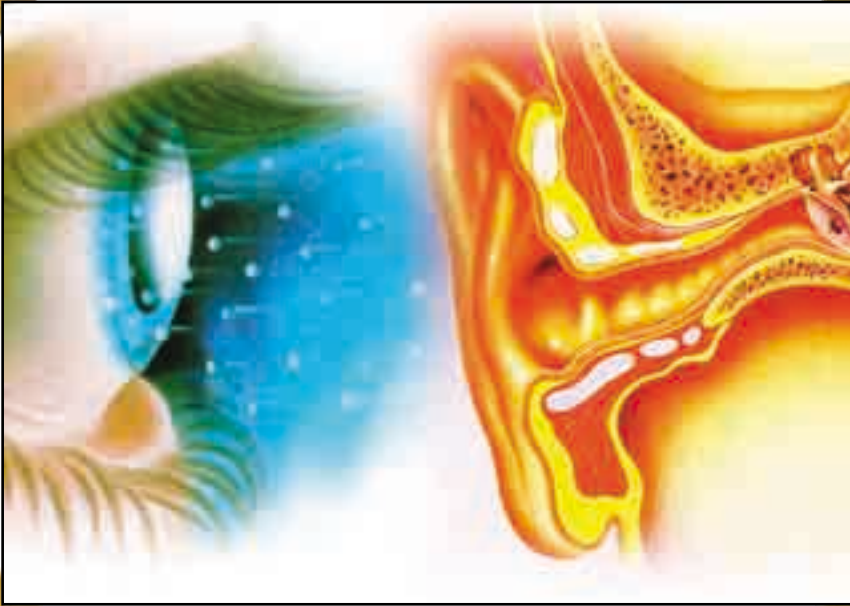
The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE EYE AND THE EAR

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of "how we see." Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the retina of the eye. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and they reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain called the centre of vision. These electric signals are perceived in this centre of the brain as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that the inside of the brain is completely dark, and light does not reach the location where the brain is situated. The place called the centre of vision is a completely dark place where no light ever reaches; it may even be



the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, coloured, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge

premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, ten of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV, and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system but it is not possible to watch it without putting on glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear; the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them; the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalises in

the centre of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just like it is from light: it does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your brain, which is insulated from sound, you listen to the symphonies of an orchestra, and hear all the noises in a crowded place. However, if the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, it would be seen that a complete silence is prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavour, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality HI-FI systems produced by the biggest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a HI-FI you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the technology of the human body are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does HI-FI; it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no visual or recording apparatus produced by man has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are

the eye and the ear.

However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

TO WHOM DOES THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT SEES AND HEARS WITHIN THE BRAIN BELONG?

Who is it that watches an alluring world in the brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from the eyes, ears, and nose of a human being travel to the brain as electro-chemical nervous impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact about this subject: Who is it that perceives these electro-chemical nervous impulses as images, sounds, odours and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for eye, ear, and nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? There is no doubt that this consciousness does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot give any answer to these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah. The spirit needs neither the eye to watch the images, nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, nor does it need the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should



Someone who looks at a seal perceives it in his brain. Similarly, it is in his brain that he investigates and examines the features of that creature he sees in his brain. The things he learns reveal to him the perfection of Allah's creation and the superiority of His wisdom and knowledge.

ponder on Almighty Allah, should fear Him and seek refuge in Him, He Who squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimetres in a three-dimensional, coloured, shadowy, and luminous form.

A MATERIALIST FAITH

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is a claim clearly at variance with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent

with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the intermediate forms required by the theory never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how many ideas such as the earth-centered universe model have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is pressingly kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against the theory as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that the theory of evolution is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward for the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.²⁰

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to the materialist philosophy. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore,

it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species; for instance, birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales and human beings originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as the pouring rain, the lightning flash, etc., out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise and All-Knowing. This Creator is Allah, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION IS THE MOST POTENT SPELL IN THE WORLD

It needs to be made clear that anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

As has been explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors, university students, scientists such as Einstein and Galileo, artists such as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Pavarotti, as well as antelopes, lemon trees and carnations. Moreover, the scientists and professors

who believe in this nonsense are educated people. That is why it is quite justifiable to speak of the theory of evolution as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the Egyptians worshipping the Sun God Ra, totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of the Prophet Ibrahim worshipping idols they had made with their own hands or the people of the Prophet Musa worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, this situation is a lack of reason pointed to by Allah in the Qur'an. He reveals in many verses that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who disbelieve, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara: 6-7)

... They have hearts they do not understand with. They have eyes they do not see with. They have ears they do not hear with. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A'raf: 179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say, "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Surat al-Hijr: 14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason and consciousness, the planet Earth with all its features so perfectly suited to life, and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, Allah reveals in the Qur'an in the incident of the Prophet Musa and Pharaoh that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told the Prophet Musa to meet with his own magicians. When the Prophet Musa did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said, "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Surat al-A'raf: 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from the Prophet Musa and those who believed in him. However, the evidence put forward by the Prophet Musa broke that spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged" as the verse puts it.

We revealed to Musa, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A'raf: 117-119)

As we can see from that verse, when it was realized that what these people who had first cast a spell over others had done was just an illusion, they lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who under the influence of a similar spell believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them abandon them, they too will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, Malcolm Muggeridge, an atheist philosopher and supporter of evolution admitted he was worried by just that prospect:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.²¹

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a god, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders

of people all over the world. Many people who see the true face of the theory of evolution are wondering with amazement how it was that they were ever taken in by it.

*They said "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except what
You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Surat al-Baqara: 32)*

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